

DEPLOYING PLACE:
A CULTURAL ECONOMY OF ART AND URBANISM IN THE GREAT RECESSION

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ABSTRACT

George M. Scheer III: Deploying Place: A Cultural Economy of Art and Urbanism in the Great Recession
(Under the direction of Eric Watts)

Deploying Place considers how urban and cultural policies, shaped after the 2008 financial collapse, utilize discourses of place, placemaking, and place-based urbanism to transform social and economic conditions in American cities. This political economic critique looks at the intersection of urban and cultural policy, federal stimulus, private philanthropy, and artist practices directed at housing, transportation, and urban revitalization. It examines how urbanism over the last 20 years sought to enhance community resources, and forms of livability, access, and affordability while also attracting advanced industries and workforces to mid-size American cities suffering post-industrial divestment and decline.

An emerging field of creative placemaking, operating at the intersection of community and economic development, sought to introduce artistic and community-centered approaches to urban development. Case studies in New Orleans, Minneapolis, Durham, Philadelphia, and Jackson, Mississippi, examine how placemaking sought to connect social and economic resources, design healthier environments, support local businesses and community enterprises, and bridge service

needs for low income and minority communities. At the same time, many of these efforts accelerated processes of privatization and gentrification within a historic continuum of displacement and disruption of low-income, communities of color.

This dissertation argues for more comprehensive urban policy, planning processes, measurement indicators, and financing tools oriented toward retention rather than attraction of people to a place. It also contends that a more equitable distribution of resources focused on existing cultural infrastructures can strengthen existing communities where they live and work. It celebrates those more radical artistic practices that in the context of creative placemaking and urban development seek to empower community trust, resilience, and capacity to secure their own interests and place in the midst of urbanization.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AARP	American Association of Retired Persons
AEDS	African Economic Development Solutions
AIG	American International Group
ARRA	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
BID	Business Improvement District
BRV	Biederman Redevelopment Ventures
CBO	Congressional Budget Office
CCFC	Central Corridor Funders Collaborative
CCNWJ	Cooperative Community of New West Jackson
CDC	Community Development Corporation
CDFI	Community Development Financial Institutions
CED	Council for Entrepreneurial Development
DBFOM	Design/Build/Finance/Operate/Maintain
DPC	White House Domestic Policy Council
DOJ	Department of Justice
ED	Education Department
EITC	Earned Income Tax Credit
FHA	Federal Housing Act
HANO	Housing Authority of New Orleans
HBCU	Historic Black Colleges and Universities
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services

HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
LISC	Local Initiatives Support Corporation
LTR	Light Rail
MBS	McCormack Baron Salazar
MICAH	Metropolitan Interfaith Council of Affordable Housing
MWB	Minority and Women Businesses
MWBE	Minority and Women Business Enterprises
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
NEA	National Endowment for the Arts
NRI	Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative
PKC	People's Kitchen Collective
PPC	People's Paper Co-Op
PPP	Public Private Partnership
QHWRA	Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act
RTP	Raleigh-Durham Research Triangle Park
SIAP	Social Impact of the Arts Project
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TARP	Troubled Asset Relief Program
TOD	Transportation Oriented Development
VALI	Validating Arts and Livability Indicators Study

Chapter 1 | Deploying Place

Introduction

This dissertation considers an evolving discourse surrounding concepts of place in cultural policy and urbanism in the years before and following the Great Recession. Rhetorically, the use of the word place as an antecedent in phrases like “place-based urbanism” suggest policies or strategies that seek to integrate economic, cultural, and infrastructure investments in accordance with a particular geography and set of conditions. Cultural and urban policies that strategize around the development of a place profess to design more livable environments.

Place-based strategies are applied across scale, from neighborhoods and downtowns to municipalities and metropolitan regions. They factor into the development of housing, transportation, infrastructure, industry, commerce, cultural production and labor. Utilizing a language of place and placemaking, a coalition of public and private agencies—governments, foundations, property developers, private capital managers, art and cultural agencies, and artists—are seeking to transform the socio-economic and physical landscape of America’s cities.

With the new millennium came a new project of urbanization oriented by a recognition of changing demographics, declining manufacturing, and the need for advanced workforces and new industries to foster prosperity in metropolitan regions.

The recession's negative impacts made addressing challenges of poverty, income and racial segregation, joblessness, climate change, global immigration, and crumbling urban infrastructures more immediate. Billions of dollars in federal stimulus was directed toward cities and states to stem foreclosures and job loss, and in some policy circles, spark a new strategy for urban innovation and prosperity.

The promise of a new, more progressive administration, coupled with a national crisis and vast amounts of congressionally approved funding, spurred the design of place-based approaches to address urban challenges. A unified strategy at the federal level sought to integrate federal departments with programs that addressed the interdependence of economic and social conditions within connected metropolitan regions. Following their lead, city leaders, foundations and private equity firms, cultural organizations, and artists, partnered on thousands of projects, big and small, meant to help revitalize local economies, address social needs, fix aging infrastructure, and reknit the cultural fabric in a post-industrial, urban landscape. This task became known as placemaking. Throughout this text, I will explore examples of placemaking being modeled in cities like Philadelphia, New Orleans, Durham, Portland, Cleveland, Minneapolis, and Jackson, Mississippi among others.

Placemaking evolved as a discourse and a field following the financial collapse. It came to incorporate thinking from both community and economic development practices, and from the outset incorporated arts and culture as a bridge between the two. Arts and culture has always been part of the authentic quality and

makeup of a place, but over the last decade, artists and cultural organizations have come to play an increasing and more formalized role in the redevelopment of urban spaces. Long-standing research exists on the benefits of the arts in communities, and cultural planning, like urban planning, is a growing sub-field of urban development. Cultural policy makers sought to qualify (and quantify) the social and economic value of the cultural economy. They examined the role of creative industries like design, advertising, film, and architecture, alongside museums and theaters, non-profit arts organizations, individual artists, musicians, and grassroots community arts and education in their efforts to advance cultural strategies that could impact a place. Popular interest in Richard Florida's 2003 book Rise of the Creative Class accelerated the fields of cultural planning and creative placemaking in support of urban development strategies focused on attracting advanced industries and so called creative class millennials to cities. Advocates for the creative economy touted art industries (i.e. film, media, performance, entertainment) as having direct economic impact on cities and local communities. Arts agencies across the US saw opportunity in becoming part of the urbanist project to revitalize urban environments with a discourse of place. In this context, the field of creative placemaking, shaped by policy makers, foundations, and practitioners created a bridge between art, urbanism, economic and community development.

However, a significant bifurcation between community development and economic development goals in policy and urbanist discourse complicates the way placemaking is practiced. Today's economic and community development strategies

have very different values, metrics, and approaches to place and community, though I will argue they should be understood more interdependently. The former emphasizes the importance of public/private partnerships that attract new populations, resources, and capital to a place. The latter designs ways to retain existing communities, build cohesion and resilience by connecting community held resources, and capturing capital locally to be accessed and distributed to communities more equitably. This critical distinction of attraction and retention continues to determine so much of placemaking strategy, and informs the way urban environments are designed and redeveloped. The distinction denotes differences in intended outcomes, funding structures, relationships with privatization, and decisions regarding modes of engagement with whom and for whom.

Within this historicised, policy-driven narrative concerning the rhetoric of place over the last twenty years, I explore two tropes, 'concentration' and 'livability' as urban patterns or placeforms that shape the social and economic conditions in American cities. Concentration is about a city's challenge to simultaneously attract workforce talent, industries, and capital into revitalizing of urban environments while attending to a seemingly endemic challenge of poverty, which is also concentrated and increasingly burdened by a competition for urban space. Livability is a goal of urban design strategy, measured in accordance with concerns for a healthy environment, diversity, enhanced public access to resources, and affordability. These placeforms operate interdependently and have real consequences for the redevelopment of urban geography following the financial collapse and foreclosure

crisis. Complicating matters, patterns of concentration and notions of livability are predicated on the historical divestment, infrastructural upheaval, and (de)concentration of low-income communities of color in previous renewal processes. Today, they appear equally productive of increasing privatization and displacement.

There are, however, powerful examples throughout this dissertation describing artists who are creating brilliantly within communities. Artists working within a field of creative placemaking are helping communities build their tensile strength, and are doing so in the context of housing, business development, transportation access, environmental, economic, and carceral justice. Their work is multidisciplinary and performative, socially engaged and participatory, conceptual and material, historical and narrative driven. While urban and cultural policies can address how and where investments ought to be made, it takes artists, invested critically in the concerns of their communities, to seed the way for strategies whose outcomes are more equitable, comprehensive, and valued by those communities. As system-thinkers, artists help can make visible the often invisible structures that define place—how communities ground themselves, build trust, sustain and retain value, resources and capital. As placemakers, artist can cultivate places where communities are empowered to speak to the interdependence of their needs, make demands, and control their development narratives. There is a lot to critique, but there is also artistry and community work to celebrate.

Deploying Place

Over the last decade, an evolving rhetoric of ‘place’ in urban policy has sought to connect economic prosperity with the values of community health in American cities and neighborhoods. Place-based thinking marks a shift in the character of today’s urban development efforts, and signals an interest in planning that is more community-oriented, culturally and equitably aware. At the same time, place-based redevelopment policies that came into focus following the 2008 financial crisis threatened to repeat many patterns and behaviors from earlier renewal efforts by creating geographically defined wealth and income disparities, displacement of low income communities, racial and economic segregation.

Previous financial crises, dating back to the Great Depression combined federal stimulus with national infrastructure projects. These recoveries periods combined urban and cultural policy to support economic recovery by absorbing surplus-capital and labor, encouraging lending and stabilizing financing.¹ However, driven by abuses in the subprime mortgage market, the 2008 crisis eviscerated remaining manufacturing industry, created a wave of home foreclosures, and generally deepened economic and racial disparity in American cities.² For Urban policy experts, the financial crisis made apparent that problems of poverty, declining labor and industry, and crumbling infrastructure weakening US cities were deeply

¹ Harvey, David. “The Right to the City.” *New Left Review* 53 (September October-2008): 23-40.

² Mallach, Alan. “Stabilizing Communities: A Federal Response to the Secondary Impacts of the Foreclosure Crisis.” Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2009.

endemic, racially and economically interdependent, geographically segregated and place-specific. Moreover, the persistence of these problems confounded urban redevelopment efforts to remake American cities as the country's most effective economic engines.³ Policy-makers began to emphasize place-specific economic remedies.

With the passing of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, (ARRA),⁴ place-based economic revitalization, or 'placemaking' emerged as the prevailing strategy directing investments into civic, cultural, and commercial infrastructures across the United States. Over the last decade, placemaking strategies have helped shape an interdisciplinary field of urban practitioners seeking to combine the values of community health and wellbeing with economic development by investing in previously divested and under-valued real estate. Planning and development firms, economic and cultural agencies, municipal departments, corporate and community foundations, arts, design, and neighborhood organizations all use a rhetoric of placemaking to catalyze public and private investments into amenity-filled parks, plazas, river-walks, greenways, refurbished downtown streetscapes, data and research 'corridors,' mixed income housing complexes, light-rail, and other urban infrastructures.

³ Wial, Howard. "Is the Economic Recovery Running Out of Steam?" Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, June 15, 2010.

⁴ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. *H.R. 1, American Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009*, 111th Congress. H. Report 111-16, February 17, 2009.

Despite the holistic rhetoric of place-based strategies urban policy continues to be bifurcated into economic versus community development approaches. This duality impedes the ability of placemaking to integrate social welfare into the economic recovery of cities. Policy makers speak about urban revitalization in either an economic development or community development context without fully embracing the interdependency of the two. Urban policy researchers report a growing concentration of economic resources, industries, and labor forces in the metropolitan assembly of cities but struggle to coordinate those resources while also managing growing disparities. Metro-policy specifically, pioneered by the Brookings Institute since the mid 1990's, tends to deepen the bifurcation of urban design policy by orienting their strategies around two different conceptions of urban place. One place is depicted as distressed, composed of an increasingly suburban concentrations of people living below the poverty line with a lack of access to affordable housing, transportation and jobs.⁵ The other place is also defined by its concentration and density, but depicted as innovative and attractive to highly educated workforce. In this urban place, skilled talent is attracted by the vibrancy and convenience of urban life that contains live/work residential spaces attached to mixed-use commercial and cultural districts in close proximity to jobs in advanced technological and industry clusters.⁶

⁵ Erickson, David, Carolina Reid, Lisa Nelson, Anne O'Shaughnessy, and Alan Berube, eds. *The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America: Case Studies from Communities Across the U.S.* Richmond, VA: Federal Reserve System and the Brookings Institution, 2008.

⁶ Katz, Bruce, and Julie Wagner. *The Rise of Innovation Districts: A New Geography of Innovation in America.* Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. 2014.

In many instances, these places occupy the same metropolitan geography, but very different policy strategies are applied to address their needs. For the former, policies tend to displace residents, raze current housing, encourage incentives for private development with housing and school vouchers so some residents can “choose” new neighborhoods. For the latter, policies encourage greater population density, coordinate business recruitment, hiring, and retention practices, encourage advancements in qualities of place, and increase access through multi-model transportation.

Social and economic impact measurements (i.e access to housing affordability, public transit, vacancy and crime rate, quality of schools, parks and environment) attempt the measure and track the improving quality of life in a renewed place. However, those tracking these measurements often ignore corresponding metrics and secondary impacts that illustrate the implications of renewal on under-resourced communities (i.e. increasing property values, rent burden, commute times, policing).⁷ Metrics also tend to focus on deficits, such as vacancy rates, blight, and unemployment without distinguishing associated structural problems. Moreover, for all the ways of measuring deficit in a community there are no metrics for reporting social and cultural trust, workarounds, and informal systems of community survival, which illustrate the ways people regularly make due in conditions of scarcity. Perhaps with a more measured approach, basic protections for commonly valued social and economic outcomes can be obtained.

⁷ These metrics were generated during previous research in summer of 2016. Since then the site has been removed and only available through the WayBack Machine.

However, livability and vitality is rarely available to all, and those urban policies that appear to protect under-resourced communities by subsidizing, for example, affordable housing, still drives gentrification and displacement. More brazenly, metrics describing urban placeforms are often treated like scorecards⁸ or dividend returns⁹ that rank a place's competitiveness to attract more wealthy consumers, professionals, and investors. These practices, which drive the narratives around urban redevelopment explicitly obscure the displacement of original residents, businesses, and communities, which aggravates existing community ills all in the name of economic recovery.

The following section provides an overview of how a history of urbanization has oriented today's discourses around place and culture. I examine an enduring bifurcation between economic and community development policy and consider how socio-economic metrics distinguish economic impact ahead of community value. I further interrogate the way metrics promoting urban revitalization are designed to privilege economically advantaged populations over disadvantaged populations, and in accordance with placemaking efforts, promote a logic of attraction rather than retention, and increase concentrations of wealth in urban cores rather than stabilizing and growing communities from their essential assets. I look at how cultural policy addresses economic versus community development through differing strategies offered by creative placemaking and cultural planning. Finally, I consider

⁸ Walk Score. "Live Where You Love." 2019. <https://www.walkscore.com/>.

⁹ CEOs for Cities. "Making your City Smarter isn't as Hard as you Think. December 12, 2016. <https://ceosforcities.org/category/talent-dividend/>.

how the financial tools that shape urban redevelopment tactics are themselves structurally flawed and produce bad outcomes for economically impoverished communities.

Urbanization and the Emergence of Placemaking

Urbanization has historically been the engine for the expansion of global capitalism. Labor, manufacturing, and the means of production are systematically and spatially organized by cities and nation-states through urbanization projects. In this section, I consider how urbanization historically created a shift in register from infrastructure expansion and wealth accumulation to industry transformation and workforce realignment. I then look at how early placemaking efforts utilized public subsidy and cultural strategies to further concentrate wealth and industry resources in urban geographies while advancing privatization and unlocking value in depressed and divested properties.

Writing in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, David Harvey revises Lefebvre's classic "Right to the City" thesis, arguing that the organizing practices of the working class doesn't drive the cultural and political power of the city, but instead mechanisms of global finance possess the city's will to power. The production and absorption of surplus capital and labor is a chief motivator in a process of urbanization. "If labour is scarce and wages are high, either existing labour has to be disciplined...or fresh labour forces must be found."¹⁰ Urbanization projects not only seek to attract and train advanced workforces, but more importantly, develop new

¹⁰ Harvey, "The Right to the City." 24.

physical and financial instruments, uncover new property value, and design policies to ensure debt financing, risk diversification, and development subsidies for investors, including the outright state seizure of land.¹¹

Urbanization processes, according to Harvey, respond to a need to produce and absorb surplus capital by shifting the scale of development. Like Haussmann in Paris before him, Robert Moses in the post-war period changed the scale of urbanization, “Through a system of highways and infrastructural transformations, suburbanization and the total reengineering of not just the city but also the whole metropolitan region, he helped resolve the capital-surplus absorption problem. To do this, he tapped into new financial institutions and tax arrangements that liberated the credit to debt-finance urban expansion.”¹² Jane Jacobs and other traditionalists resisted Moses with calls for a more localized, neighborhood aesthetics and economy.¹³ But the infrastructure of mass suburbanization was well in place by the time of Jacob’s activism, laying the groundwork for decades of segregated communities, uneven distribution of wealth, and geographic division of progressive and conservative politics.

Cultural planning emerged in the 1990s to help re-integrate physical, cultural and arts assets into a city’s broader urban development and planning efforts.¹⁴

¹¹ Harvey, “The Right to the City,” 26.

¹² Harvey, “The Right to the City,” 27.

¹³ Havey, “The Right to the City,” 28.

¹⁴ Redaelli, Eleonora. “Assessing a Place in Cultural Planning: A Framework for American Local Governments.” *Cultural Trends* 22, no. 1 (2013): 30-44.

Research into cultural planning first pioneered by the Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) at the University of Pennsylvania, used GIS data and partnerships with a Community Development Corporation (CDC) to apply cultural investments into Philadelphia neighborhoods. Their research showed how cultural planning could increase social and economic security alongside economic revitalization.¹⁵ Their research developed strategies for identifying and measuring the social and economic values of so called naturally occurring cultural district, distinct neighborhoods and district containing broad but integrated cultural offerings.

In the early 2000's, as industries sought cheaper labor overseas and manufacturing declined in regions across the country, the need to shift the drivers of metropolitan economies became increasingly pressing. Richard Florida's Rise of the Creative Class,¹⁶ became a mainstream discourse that city leaders used to focus their urban development strategies around workforce development, creative industries, and placemaking for local and regional economies. The Creative Class conceptualized the idea of 'creative' to encapsulate a highly educated workforce important to a growing service economy whose social activities and economic appetites were defined not solely by careers and corporate allegiance but by the places in which they lived. In this way, Florida connected the concepts of innovation, lifestyle, and economic growth with a comparative place-based identity politics.¹⁷

¹⁵ Social Impact of the Arts (SIAP). "About SIAP." *School of Social Policy and Practice*. University of Pennsylvania. <http://impact.sp2.upenn.edu/siap/about.html>.

¹⁶ Florida, Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.

¹⁷ Florida, Richard. "America's Leading Creative Class Cities in 2015." CityLab. April 20, 2015.

Despite criticisms that Florida's model produced gentrification and other socio-economic harms, his creative class concept remains popular in placemaking and today's urban policy¹⁸

As placemaking emerged within policy conversations in line with metro policy strategies for increasing population density and innovation-based capital in divested urban environments, it sought to apply cultural planning concepts to leverage public support and private investment in a place. Placemaking advocates for the use of cultural assets as "multipliers" increasing spatial and economic value and efficiency in urban cores. For example, A makeshift plaza with seating and pedestrian access is how the famed Times Square revitalization began to capture consumer interest and multiply the value in property markets.¹⁹ In the context of recovery and in relationship to metropolitan policy, placemaking also considered how cultural assets in places could attract creative workforce, increasing surrounding property value, and enhancing the broad economic gains within an urban development process.²⁰

Looking to connect with the Obama administration's recovery efforts and its Office of Urban Affairs the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) made placemaking an essential part of national arts policy.²¹ The NEAs influential white

¹⁸ Florida, Richard. "America's Leading Creative Class Cities in 2015."

¹⁹ Rhodes, Margaret. "The Brilliant Simplicity of New York's New Times Square." Wired. April 19, 2017. <https://www.wired.com/2017/04/brilliant-simplicity-new-yorks-new-times-square/>.

²⁰ Sabol, Patrick, and Robert Puentes. *Private Capital, Public Good: Drivers of Successful Infrastructure Public Private Partnerships*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, December 17, 2014.

²¹ Pogreman, Robin. "New Endowment Chairman Sees Arts as an Economic Engine," *The New York Times*, August 7, 2009.

paper, “Creative Placemaking,” the Endowment further positioned placemaking and creative economy rhetoric as an integral part of municipal planning and economic development efforts. Authors Markusen and Gadwa made the case for urban revitalization by creative initiatives that “animate places and spark economic development.”²² The white paper helped fuel a decade of federal and foundation grants, national urban-arts initiatives, and field building efforts supporting arts and cultural investment around placemaking.

Municipalities seeking additional funding for infrastructure projects and to leverage private investment, began adding public art and other creative components to their scope of work. Cultural foundations seeking to align their giving with federal recovery efforts and municipal planning began funding artists and cultural agencies to do work within an urban revitalization and economic development context. Unlike the 1930’s Work Progress Administration, which deployed federal dollars to fund artists to create work in relation to Depression era infrastructure projects, the vast majority of placemaking funds following the “great recession” came from the private sector. With “creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities.”²³

Through Creative placemaking, arts organizations began producing programming that promised economic impact while positively affecting the quality of

²² Markusen, Ann, and Anne Gadwa. *Creative Placemaking: A White Paper for The Mayor’s Institute on City Design*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2010.

²³ Markusen and Gadwa. *Creative Placemaking*, 3.

a place, including its “livability, diversity, jobs and incomes.”²⁴ Artists that traditionally used in aesthetic and political concepts to create public art and socially engaged practices began developing work with functional and practical approaches to create valuable impact of art on a city’s planning strategies. Public Art Saint Paul’s City Artist In Residence Program was one of the first in the nation to place an artist within a city planning department. Projects include Artist Amanda Lovelee’s “Pop Up Meeting” which designed a municipal van vending free ice-pops to stage pop-up city planning meetings and community feedback forums in public spaces. Another project, “Sidewalk Poetry” utilizes municipal sidewalk repair schedules to place community sourced poetry into the concrete. The unique value of the project is not simply the placement of poetry in public space, but that the project’s determination to ensure poetry was placed in every neighborhood forced the municipal repair teams to prioritize under-resourced and minority neighborhoods for sidewalk repair. Various forms of city-artist-in-residence programs can now be found across the country and in state and municipal cultural affairs, planning, and transportation departments.

As Foundations entered the placemaking and creative economy field, metrics were increasingly needed to help measure and coordinate the deployment of arts funding and determine the impact of the work. Under the banner of creative placemaking, outcomes were designed to match strategies of economic and urban development efforts. Indicators and other evaluative frameworks like “livability,” or “vibrancy,” orient shared values around place and direct the deployment of

²⁴ Markusen and Gadwa. *Creative placemaking*, 3.

resources by private foundations.²⁵ As a product of foundations and public funders, the idea of “payoffs” and “gains” of cultural projects and how economic development is impacted became a core component for developing and measuring creative placemaking.²⁶

Metrics-based cultural planning has the effect of serving the evaluation model’s design, and can lead to unintended consequences. For example, ArtPlace America, a 10 year, multi-foundation, grant making initiative in direct support of Creative Placemaking, used a measurement tool called a vibrancy indicator to measure placemaking’s impact. The design of the metric directly supported placemaking’s role in commercialization, but also reinforced historically segregated lines of racial and economic disparity by promoting the concentration of wealth and activity in formerly divested urban centers. Americans for the Arts Economic Prosperity Study produced data accounting for cultural programming’s dollar-for-dollar economic impact on consumer spending and inspired a national wave of cultural economy interest in art as an economic industry with high paying jobs and spending in entertainment and cultural tourism. These foundation driven, metric focused approaches set the bar for artistic production in the recovery period and the expansion of the cultural economy as instrument for urbanization, capitalization, and privatization of urban spaces across America.

²⁵ Morley, Elaine , and Mary K. Winkler. “Assessing a Set of Indicators for Creative Placemaking: Reflections From the Field.” *Community Development Investment Review* 10, no. 2 (2014): 49-55.

²⁶ ArtPlace. “Vibrancy Indicators.” Accessed July 29, 2017. (removed from website by no later than July 29, 2017).

Cultural Planning and Creative Placemaking

As a key component of the urbanization process, placemaking problematically operates from a logic of attraction (i.e. attract population, talent, investment, tourism) rather than retention (i.e. retain communities, businesses, housing, jobs, properties). This leads placemaking to re-inforce systematic disparities rather than integrate cultural assets. *Placemaking* by its very nature identifies a lack of social, cultural, and economic value in the areas in which investments are made. The explicit purpose of those investments is to increase value. Often this means increasing populations' access to a place, encouraging participation from people not currently present, and building a market where there is not one. Most often, those audiences or consumers are high-asset individuals, and most often those places are targeted specifically because they are economically under-valued and therefore ripe for investment.

Early cultural planning didn't approach communities as resources for extraction and capitalization. They saw communities and their culture as vital assets for building social and economic capital. SIAP's early research challenged the idea of *planned* cultural districts with the idea of *naturally occurring* cultural districts. The former describes a strategy of attraction and the latter a strategy of retention. Planned cultural districts often entail expensive public/private investments in large capital projects, like a performing arts centers (i.e. Barclay Center in downtown Brooklyn, the Shed in Hudson Yards, or Durham's Performing Arts Center). These

massive infrastructures support large public participation in the arts, and intended to rapidly increase the concentration of people in a place through cultural attraction. However, these cultural infrastructures, which might attract upwards of 19,000 people a night are designed to attract and capture capital in formerly underpopulated and under resourced places. They require extensive overhead, maintenance, and cultural capital to produce and sustain. Moreover, those visiting these kinds of planned cultural districts from other neighborhoods or regions have only a short term investment in mostly entertainment, culture, and food products. This expanded population of a limited class of consumers doesn't readily invest or partake in surrounding services, and instead disrupts existing community services and businesses long established for the people living in that place. While capital accumulates and is captured by these massive entertainment infrastructures, the people who most immediately reside in proximity to these places lose access to services and face increasing costs in their livability.

A naturally occurring cultural district, on the other hand, focus resources toward existent clusters of cultural assets. Places like the 4th Street Arts Block in New York City, which is composed of 51 distinct theaters, art spaces, and cultural organizations, extend promotion, funding and other resources across a network of emergent and longstanding cultural institutions, and help strengthen self-organizing efforts of surrounding communities including small business retention programs and tenant rights programs. Evidence suggests that channeling resources toward existing cultural assets and network building as part of a broad urban planning

framework fosters community cohesion, increases population and draws new residents into communities. This approach also reduces poverty, while fostering gradual growth that prevents displacement, and supports cultural, ethnic, and class diversity in a place.²⁷ Today, foundations and artists are pushing the placemaking field to increasingly focus on equity through the creation of more intentional, accountable, and access-centered metrics, and is giving credence to this naturally occurring strategy. However, that has not been dominant mode from which placemaking as a cultural policy emerged.

There are several structural elements that have discourage placemaking strategy from focusing on retention. First, a focus on retention requires that development strategies center on surrounding community needs rather than beginning with the economic strategies that identify profit in higher asset individuals and consumer classes that are currently present. Urban policy makers must find ways to interdependently address social and economic issues of under-resourced communities while attracting outside resources. Increasingly in the urban sphere, poor communities and creative workforces are competing for the same place. Policy protection and integrated programs and services may allow communities to share stable and productive places. However this requires overcoming significant racial and class biases, and an imagination around development and urban planning that undoes a basic bifurcation of community and economic development strategies.

²⁷ Social Impact for the Arts (SIAP). "Culture Builds Community: The Power of Arts and Culture in Community Building." *Culture Builds Community* 3 (2002).

Second, municipal financing tools cities have readily available for advancing economic redevelopment, including tax increment financing, district designations, vouchers, affordable housing, historic tax credits, and eminent domain, all promote forms of exclusivity and displacement. These municipal financing tools are expensive, legally complex, and operate at varied scales—across regions, counties, tax districts and neighborhoods. Such complexity requires a coordination of district, municipal, and county legislators to direct investments and incentives. Access to incentives, financial tools, and supportive legislators remains primarily in the realm of private developers, economic development and government agencies, and increasingly community development corporations and other non-profit financiers like LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation).²⁸ The recent retreat of Amazon from Long Island City in Queens, New York illustrates how competing agendas among economic development agencies, state, city and council legislatures, and neighborhood residents and activist groups discouraged a multi-billion dollar company from building its new headquarters in New York.²⁹ Most of the mechanisms that finance place-based investments, except perhaps bonds and ballot measures, weaken the capacity for community-based development to lead economic revitalization.

²⁸ LISC NYC. “NYC Inclusive Creative Economy Fund.” <http://www.lisc.org/nyc/inclusive-creative-economy-fund/>.

²⁹ Goodman, J. David. “Amazon Pulls Out of Planned New York City Headquarters.” *The New York Times*, February 14, 2019.

Third, compounding this problem is that the non-profits and cultural agencies operating in developing places, serving those communities, and often tasked with the cultural and social work of placemaking, don't have adequate mechanisms to create and sustain surplus-capital at the same rate as private developers and municipal governments. Unlike for-profit businesses and municipalities, not-for-profits don't have ready access to debt financing and cash-flow investments. Local agencies might benefit from increased investment surrounding them, but they often don't have equity in property and therefore cannot effectively capitalize or leverage those investments. While they may benefit from new sources of placemaking funds or increased audiences, it is challenging to build capacity, adapt to new market patterns, or scale means of production without sustained access to cash flow. Eventually, market and real-estate forces may displace or dismantle not-for-profit infrastructures and their constituencies.

Fourth, racism, classism, and geographic bias constructed around poverty and housing prevent policies of retention in placemaking efforts, especially those focused on economic redevelopment. Homelessness is an easy and acceptable target for developers and municipalities to begin a campaign against poor people living in places undergoing economic speculation. People living below the poverty line and experiencing homelessness are directly displaced through rezoning and policing. The agencies that support these people and are often located in urban centers because public transportation is more reliable, are also being displaced. Worse is when redeveloped affordable and market rate housing properties utilize

prohibitive tenant rules to further exclude disadvantaged and low income individuals and families from maintaining residence, despite the availability of funding subsidy. The most blatant and discriminatory practices become common because housing and social services sectors are not deeply involved in the urban and cultural planning processes, and instead, the challenge of urban poverty is managed through technocratic means, such as tax credits for affordable-rate units and Opportunity Zones, that provide subsidies for private developers.³⁰

Addressing people's needs with technocratic tools that are only able to be leveraged by organized capital (i.e. private developers, private equity, banks, foundations), can not possibly address those people's needs. Quite the opposite, tax incentives for mixed income affordable housing development tends to reduce the total number of affordable units and increase the number of market rate housing. Even worse, there is evidence to show that public investment in transportation infrastructure intended to create greater access to affordable housing is often a prelude for private investment into high end, market rate properties built as soon as tax-credits expire.³¹ Narrow technocratic processes and short term decisions often hide long term development strategies.

Even foundations, which now appear to be leading a national discussion around equity, regularly disqualify those community organizations most effective in

³⁰ Internal Revenue Service (IRS). "Opportunity Zones Frequently Asked Questions." Last modified April 17, 2019. <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions>.

³¹ Harrell, Rodney, Allison Brooks, and Todd Nedwick. *Preserving Livability and Access in Affordable Communities: Subsidized Housing Opportunities near Transit and the 50+ Population*. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute, 2009.

retaining and serving existing community fabrics. Something as simple as foundation's deference to highly organized and professional infrastructures for allocating grants or year-long programming cycles rather than multi-year funding disqualifies those most disruptive, non-hierarchical, collectively led, community-based and responsive organizations from accessing funding.³²

The history of foundations are bound up with the security of private wealth and progressive cultural reform programs that maintained white social-supremacy at periods of socio-economic transformation in America.³³ Foundation funding during periods of immigration reform in the 19th century and later responding to Black urban uprisings in the 1960's, intended to tame radical social movements, disrupt unionization, and professionalize mass movement politics as a means to maintain white social hegemony.³⁴ Arguably, in today's cultural economy, which is funded heavily by private foundations in partnership with global banks,³⁵ a critical review of the so called "non profit industrial complex,"³⁶ warrants skepticism toward the putative altruism driving investments in placemaking.

Conclusions

At the onset of economic crisis, with billions of dollars infused into the economy, opportunities arose to design how cities could grow and how surplus

³²INCITE! *The Revolution will not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007. 36

³³ INCITE! *The Revolution*, 37

³⁴ INCITE! *The Revolution*, 31

³⁵ ArtPlace. "Working Partnerships." <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/about/partners>.

³⁶ INCITE! *The Revolution*, 8

capital and federal funding would be invested in the urbanization process. Just as immediately, foreclosure and social instability was disrupting communities and devaluing their land. Alongside economic and social crisis an evolving discourse surrounding place was evolving that promised gains for both. The urbanization strategies proposed by metropolitan policy, placemaking, and cultural planning all imagined how a diverse set of inputs—housing, transportation infrastructure, industry, and culture—could integrate within a project of economic and community development. The strategy moving forward was to create a “new geography” of interdependence, according to Bruce Katz, Program Director of Brookings Institute Metropolitan Policy Program. For Katz, speaking at a 2009 NYU law school conference entitled, “A Crisis is a Terrible Thing to Waste,” America’s 20th century geography of wealth, socio-economic, industrial, and racial patterns was dramatically shifting. This shift, Katz argued, demanded a new conception of place, geographically, economically, and socially. It is the “spatial imperative of this century.”³⁷

In the following chapter, I will examine the timeline of metropolitan and cultural policy as it emerges from the housing crisis and how place-based designs and resulting dynamics of the \$700 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus package failed to respond to existing social and demographic trends present in the American landscape.³⁸ Chapter three and four will consider

³⁷ Katz, Bruce. *The White House Office of Urban Policy: Form and Function*. February 12, 2009. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0212_housing_katz.pdf.

³⁸ US Congress. *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009*, 111th Congress. Pub. L. No. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115, 516 (Feb. 19, 2009).

how cultural and economic policy gave shape to the evolving metropolitan placeform. Developing the concepts of accumulation and concentration, chapter three will examine a dual paths for place in metro policy composed by concentrated poverty³⁹ and innovation districts.⁴⁰ In chapter four, I delve deeper into the design and function of place-based metrics as directive of social health and community cohesion. In chapter five I will examine how *art works* as part of a cultural policy and basis for a national field of art and creative placemaking aiming to transform the socio-economic outcomes for developing communities.

³⁹ Kneebone, Elizabeth. *The Great Recession and Poverty in Metropolitan America*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2010.

⁴⁰ Puentes, Robert, and Peter McFerrin. *The Intersection of Place and the Economy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2012.

Chapter 2 | Stimulating Partnership, Privatization and Placemaking

Introduction

On September 24th, 2008, presidential candidates, Barack Obama and John McCain issued a joint statement, “The jobs, savings, and prosperity of the American people are at stake.”⁴¹ Only ten days before, Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy and President George W. Bush with Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson were working on the details of a \$700 billion bill meant to save the American financial system by buying back troubled mortgage assets. Two days later, presidential candidate and Senator Barack Obama stated in his opening remarks of the presidential debate, “Although we’ve heard a lot about Wall Street, those of you on Main Street I think have been struggling for a while.” Republican Senator John McCain echoed the place-based metaphor, “We’re not talking about failure of institutions on Wall Street. We’re talking about failures on Main Street, and people who will lose their jobs, and their credits, and their homes, if we don’t fix the greatest fiscal crisis, probably in—certainly in our time.”⁴²

⁴¹ Zeleny, Jeff. “Obama and McCain Issue Joint Statement on the Economy.” *The New York Times*, September 24, 2008.

⁴² Obama, Barack, and John McCain. *The First Presidential Debate*. Transcript. *The New York Times*, September 26, 2008.

The dueling countenances of Wall Street and Main Street framed a national discussion on the meaning and values of American prosperity. Two places in American life intertwined. One, an actual road, so named by Dutch colonists, stood for the American marketplace, global investment, and finance capitalism. The other, a simulacra of the common downtown street where local community and business converge in a parochial and idyllic picture of a family-oriented, hardworking, prosperous, and meritocratic American dream. In stark political and economic terms, the financial collapse demonstrated the interdependence of these two places. Wall Street assets—comprised of Main Street mortgages, backed by subprime loans, bundled and resold in financial markets—were threatening an entire global economy and the home ownership of American families across the country. More than sixty years of American home ownership, a cornerstone of postwar American prosperity, coupled with the expansive and speculative growth of the financial services markets, created a crisis of value on balance sheets and in neighborhoods.

In the fractious environment of financial disaster, a policy logic quickly took shape—stabilization and stimulus. On October 3rd, 2008, Congress passed, and President Bush signed into law the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-343), which established the \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP).⁴³ These two bills sought to immediately stabilize Wall Street by buying troubled assets from financial institutions. Shortly following Barack Obama's election, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

⁴³ Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. "Financial Crisis Timeline." Accessed July 18, 2017. <https://www.stlouisfed.org/financial-crisis/full-timeline>.

(ARRA). Described as a stimulus plan, the legislation made appropriations for immediate investment in employment, infrastructure, and energy.⁴⁴ TARP insured the solvency of Wall Street, but it did not address the destabilization that the financial industry wrought on Main Street. The ARRA attempted to address instability on Main Street, but it was unclear how or if stimulus could solve structural problems.

In this chapter I consider how the ARRA stimulus package was designed in accordance with metropolitan policy's vision for an integrated place-based economy. I examine how the design of stimulus funding was stymied by federal fund disbursement through state and country governments and how this affected efforts to integrate economies throughout metropolitan regions. I then consider how a formalized strategy of public private partnerships (PPP) aimed to overcome blockage in the system dynamics, but ultimately lead to greater privatization of public resources and infrastructures. In this context I consider the evolution of Creative Placemaking and the launch of ArtPlace America, a public private partnership funding community and economic development efforts. I explore two Creative Placemaking projects in Philadelphia and how each address possibility for art and artists to support economic and community development.

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act and TARP was designed for "providing stability to and preventing disruption in the economy and financial system,"⁴⁵ but the \$800 billion appropriated by ARRA was far more distributed and

⁴⁴ American Recovery And Reinvestment Act of 2009 : P.L. 111-5, (February 17, 2009)

⁴⁵ US Congress. *Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008*. 110 Congress. Pub L. No. 110-343, 122 Stat. 3765 (October 3, 2008).

place-based. Funds dispersed across federal departments aimed to support infrastructure development, transportation, urban/rural development, and housing. The ARRAs goal was to quickly modernize infrastructure, boost the economy, stem unemployment, and create jobs. Based on Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates, by 2015 the ARRA dispersed over \$300 billion in funds.⁴⁶ Under Title XII, \$61 billion was allocated to transportation, housing, and urban development with \$27.5 billion to highway construction, \$20 billion to other transportation needs, \$4 billion to capital funding of public housing and almost \$9 billion to housing assistance.⁴⁷ Under Title I, \$11.7 billion was allocated to support rural housing insurance and \$2.5 billion for rural broadband programs.⁴⁸ Interior, environment and related agencies, including national parks were appropriated \$10.5 billion.

The logic of stimulus appropriation was to quickly deploy funds into the economy by putting billions of dollars into the hands of state agencies through block grants distributed by federal departments. In an effort to ensure short term capital entered the economy quickly, the block grants demanded that the funds be invested immediately. For example, construction to enhance transportation infrastructures needed to be ready for bid within 120 days of the Act's passage. This meant that construction projects had to already be identified, planned, designed, and awaiting bidding and financing to qualify for stimulus. Additional provisions sought geographic

⁴⁶ Elmendorg, Douglas. *HR 1 Conference Agreement*. Congressional Budget Office, February 13, 2009. <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/99xx/doc9989/hr1conference.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Elmendorg, *HR 1*.

⁴⁸ American Recovery And Reinvestment Act of 2009 : P.L. 111-5, (February 17, 2009).

equity and fair distribution of funds across rural and urban spaces. Grants measured the effectiveness of economic stimulus simply by the “number of jobs created or saved in relation to the Federal dollars obligated.”⁴⁹ Secondary selection criteria were established to evaluate applicants ability to optimize long-term public and economic benefit as defined by investment in health technology, transportation, environmental protection, energy independence, and educational quality.⁵⁰

The new White House Office of Urban Affairs was established in February 2009 to coordinate executive branch policy for urban areas including the outlay of stimulus funds. The office promised an executive level integration of urban development strategies that acknowledged the economic power of metro areas. The President’s executive order establishing the office advocated for a city’s role in “innovation, economic growth, and cultural enrichment through the businesses, universities, and civic, cultural, religious, and nonprofit institutions they attract,”⁵¹ an acknowledgement of the integration of public private resources and institutions driving urban development. This strategy fit squarely with the Brookings Institute’s metropolitan policy, aimed at creating greater interdependence within regional

⁴⁹ Obama, Barack, and Office of the Press Secretary. “Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies: Ensuring Responsible Spending of Recovery Act Funds.” March 20, 2009.
<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/memorandum-heads-executive-departments-and-agencies-32009>.

⁵⁰ Obama and the Office of the Press Secretary, “Memorandum.”

⁵¹ Office of the Press Secretary. “Executive Order: Establishment of the White House Office of Urban Affairs.” February February 19, 2009.
http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Executive-Order-Establishment-of-the-White-House-Office-of-Urban-Affairs/.

economies.⁵² Bruce Katz, Director of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program described the Office of Urban Affairs as a “new vision for a federal-metropolitan partnership in service of productive, inclusive, and sustainable growth.”⁵³ Successful metropolitan policy, argued Katz, “marries national vision and purpose with local and metro implementation and invention, and couples public sector engagement with the private sector energy and discipline.”⁵⁴

Early assessments of the ARRA by the Brookings Institute argued that the design of stimulus funding was very much in line with a metro policy agenda—innovation, human capital, infrastructure, and quality of place. The ARRA seemed to be appropriately designed to support each dimension. For example, the ARRA dispursed \$50 billion in research and development for universities, health complexes, and research centers to support science, business, and university innovation. \$20 billion in bonds for clean energy production matched strategies for industry innovation and enhancing qualities of place through more environmentally healthy communities. Regarding human capital, there was \$125 billion in tax measures for school improvements and workforce training deemed necessary for an advanced technological economy. There was \$126 billion allocated to transportation, energy, and water-sewer to support the infrastructures that connect labor, manufacturing, and distribution of goods. Lastly, quality of place enhancements, which enable cities to be more affordable and sustainable places for people to live,

⁵² Katz, Bruce. “The Great Recession: What Comes Next for Our Metropolitan Nation.” *Brookings*. October 26, 2009.

⁵³ Katz, “Great Recession.”

⁵⁴ Katz, “Great Recession.”

received \$34 billion to support energy efficiency, affordable housing, and neighborhood stabilization through various affordable housing initiatives.⁵⁵ Stimulus funding aimed not only to kickstart the economy, but align in more integrated ways resources and institutions in order to address structural issues on Main Street. This included workforce and job development needs, research into new energy economies, and funding to helping secure communities hurt by the mortgage crisis.

The deployment of stimulus funding followed a traditional model of national, state, county, and regional block grants. Brookings warned that block grants could have adverse effects on efforts to stimulate a more responsive metropolitan economy. Brookings argued that American “prosperity flows from a network of 366 diverse metropolitan economies.”⁵⁶ Unlike state, county and municipal divisions, metro-regions reflect the flows of marketplaces and populations across government boundaries. Therefore, a block grant funding pipeline was ineffective because it aligned resources with government administrations that neither understood regional issues nor had the authority to create “linked and aligned” regional growth strategies.

⁵⁷ In other words, stimulus did not make it to the metropolitan level in a balanced and responsive way because state and county departments and agencies, rather than metropolitan and regional agencies got the funds. In the Brookings Institute’s

⁵⁵ Muro, Mark, Jennifer Bradley, Allan Berube, Robert Puentes, Sarah Rahman, and Andrew Reamer. *Metro Potential in ARRA: An Early Assessment of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, March, 2009.

⁵⁶ Muro, Mark, Sarah Rahman, and Amy Liu. “Implementing ARRA: Innovations in Design in Metro America.” *Brookings*, July, 23, 2009.

⁵⁷ Muro et al., *Metro Potential in ARRA*.

assessment, “The ARRA [did] very little to actively support metropolitan leaders’ efforts to bundle and align ARRA resources to foster local and national recovery.”⁵⁸

By July 2009, the Brookings Institute was walking back its initial positive response to the ARRA, which it initially described as “metro-friendly.” Instead they asserted that the ARRA was an “imperfect instrument for metropolitan stimulus and empowerment.”⁵⁹ At the crux of their concerns was the federal government’s funding distribution model, which policy experts argued made resources inflexible and less responsive to the way economic resources moved through dense metropolitan geographies. By Brookings’ account, the funding discouraged interdisciplinary and innovative approaches at a regional level. “Rapid spend-down requirements threaten efforts to build for the long haul. The use of existing programs works against interdisciplinary solutions. Inflexible formulas and strict guidelines frustrate integrated problem-solving. Siloed money flows may preclude market-catalyzing partnerships.” Even the ARRA’s accountability was criticized by Brookings as requirements that “discourage useful experiments and more meaningful performance assessment.”⁶⁰

It proved unrealistic that the stimulus funding could provoke structural change at the same time as the economy recovered. The goals of metro policy—provoking technological development, innovating job growth, and integrating city and

⁵⁸ Muro et al., *Metro Potential in ARRA*.

⁵⁹ Muro et al., “Implementing ARRA.”

⁶⁰ Muro et al., *Metro Potential in ARRA*.

metropolitan administrations with the private sector around long-term regional strategies—was too great a project for stimulus. In a June 15th, 2010 report, Howard Wail, an economist with the Brookings Institute detailed how slow GDP growth and a 9.7% national unemployment rate was symptomatic of sluggish growth in the 100 largest metro economies. Only 36 of the largest 100 metro areas exhibited any job growth in the first quarter of 2009, and none had recovered its pre-recession employment levels. The housing market continued to be in decline, and prices were down in all 100 metro areas as compared to the first quarter of 2007. Foreclosures were also up during the first quarter in all but 16 metro areas.⁶¹

The immediate goal of stimulus was to stabilize the economy and stimulate job creation, but in the context of crisis, policy makers attempted to generate structural change. However, innovation remained elusive in practical terms. The 2010 midterm election where Republicans claimed both houses of Congress and conservative Tea Party candidates swept into power created further barriers for progressive policy and economic agendas. Together these factors forced policy experts and federal agencies to reevaluate their tactics in pursuit of a more integrated and effective metro-policy strategy that would empower the private sector to take the lead where government proved incapable and intransigent.

In the following section I explore the structure of Public Private Partnerships and how these inter-organizational relationships support the privatization of social good. Following this discussion, I consider how the evolution of Creative

⁶¹ Wail, "Is Economic Recovery."

Placemaking through the formation of federal grant programs and private funding consortiums like ArtPlace funneled resources into urban development projects. Using cultural approaches, these agencies helped integrate the private sector's role in urban policy and municipal planning while fostering a cross-sector strategy connecting community, government and private stakeholders. On one hand these approaches created new value alignments for communities undergoing redevelopment and introduced new economic and social capacities for people living in those communities. On the other hand, public funding was increasingly used to subsidized private interests and assets, enabling more private control over public resources that were shaping city's economically and culturally through urban redevelopment.

Public Private Partnerships

As policy makers at Brookings Institute grappled with the slow economic recovery they sought also to determine ways that the private sector—corporations, foundations, developers, and economic development agencies operating in municipal, metropolitan, and regional geographies—could play a more substantive role in urban development. Their first recommendation was to create for metropolitan agencies a more formal PPP structure in order to enable more effective integration of public and private resources. Their second recommendation was to build a network among federal agencies and foundations to “disseminate learning and innovation in a structured way.”⁶²

⁶² Muro et al., “Implementing ARRA,” 13.

PPP are a mechanism for integrating of private sector services, operations, and management resources and expertise into public projects. PPPs have become increasingly important as public budgets tighten, infrastructure projects become more complex, and urban planning and design expertise—not typically held by public agencies, planning departments, or city engineers—becomes more readily available in the private sector.⁶³ PPPs are not new to the urban development field. The use of private construction and architecture firms by municipal and state entities is a common form of PPP. One might even consider the creation of Olmsted parks such as Manhattan's Central Park or Mount Royal Park in Montreal as historic examples of a public/private partnership utilizing private architecture and design skills on civic projects. However, the formalization and general adoption of PPPs as a methodology is more pronounced today due to the flood of both private and public funding during the recovery period.

The Brookings Institute matrix describing the possible forms for PPP provides an overview of the way public and private sector relationships can be organized in the context of urban design and planning (fig 1). It illustrates the practical steps—design, build, finance, operation and maintenance—of constructing urban infrastructures like new interstate highways, high speed rail, or neighborhood parks. More than a simple division of labor and finances, PPPs necessitate a negotiation of public and private sector responsibilities, the sharing of risk and reward, demonstration of expertise, and more broadly how civic values, public good, and

⁶³ Sabol and Puentes, *Private Capital*.

equity are organized between public and private sectors.⁶⁴ With infrastructure planning and development increasingly addressed by multiple federal agencies, foundations, and banks, more complex Design/Build/Operate/Finance/Maintain (DBFOM) partnership models have become prevalent.

Figure 1. Different Levels of Private Sector Engagement in PPP Contracts							
	Identify Infrastructure Need	Propose Solution	Project Design	Project Financing	Construction	Operation/ Maintenance	Ownership
Bid/Build	Public Sector				Private Sector	Public Sector	
Design/Build	Public Sector		Private Sector	Public Sector	Private Sector	Public Sector	
Design/Build/Finance	Public Sector		Private Sector			Public Sector	
Design/Build/Finance/ Operate/Maintain	Public Sector		Private Sector				Public Sector
Source: Brookings analysis and expert interviews							

Figure 1: Matrix for Public and Private Partnership Arrangements

The number of private stakeholders operating in the urban development field is increasing. Today, foundations, cultural councils, banks, management companies, and private equity firms all take the position of a private partner in these arrangements. Their role can be to gather community, cultural and financial stakeholders, but they might also fund and direct planning processes, user design, and a host of architectural, management, programming, and facility services. For example, firms like Biederman Redevelopment Ventures (BRV), a public space development and management firm that created Bryant Park in New York City,

⁶⁴ Sabol and Puentes, *Private Capital*.

consults across the country on how developing partnerships can make publicly owned parks profitable. They consult municipalities and local private stakeholders on user experience, landscape design, and cultural programming, along with user fees and corporate branding as sources of revenue. While the transformation of public space into economic engines avoids the stigma of public subsidy, programmed parks, however, are strongly dependent on low wages for operations and nearly constant public programming supplied by local talent working as private contractors. Moreover, these infrastructures are often sustained not through programming but ongoing private charity, like New York City's "Friends of the High Line," which raises money for the High Line, an elevated rail park through SoHo. The creation of charitable structures supporting profit-oriented real estate maintained by public dollars can transform these public parks into wealthy playgrounds, whitewashing the reputation of philanthropists and increasing surrounding land value for private investments.

Although at first glance PPPs may be considered simple mechanisms for bringing expertise and innovation to bear upon public and social infrastructures, with deeper analysis it becomes clear that PPPs not only increase private control and operation of public infrastructure, but increasingly rely on patron classes to generate tax deductions and social capital. These public spaces, with highly visible donor walls, privately funded, public art displays, and corporate branded, chairs, gametables, fountains, movie nights, etc. reenforce the image that social activity and value in a developing place is due to the charitable patronage of a private class of

foundations, corporations, and individuals. Increasingly, their names frames the public's experience with public space, leading to forms of exclusivity, expressions of personal taste, and architectural determinations of what is the ideal social form.

Elliott D. Sclar, a professor of urban planning at Columbia University argues that PPPs are spurred by government austerity and are part of an evolution of privatization and anti-union policies. His concern is not so much about parks and lifestyle infrastructure, but instead when PPPs are used to create larger urban infrastructures like water resources and transportation. When private agencies are contracted to operate these infrastructures are not held to the same contractual agreements as governments to support, for example, unionized labor or follow requirements for bid processes that ensure inclusion of Minority and Women Businesses (MWB). Sclar worries that contracts that place the private sector in charge of public services limit “irrevocably [government’s] capacity to serve the public.”⁶⁵ In other words, public services paid for by tax dollars are subject to public scrutiny, government regulation and policy. However, private contractors managing public resources limit civic accountability.

Another concern for PPPs is private bank financing used to provide initial investment in major infrastructures like highways and seaports. Private equity firms like JP Morgan absorb fees and tolls along with loan interest payments that traditionally serviced public coffers. Infrastructure of this scale provides private financial firms a way to park large investments with stable, predictable, and high

⁶⁵ Sclar, Elliott. “Looting the Urban Commonwealth: Privatization and the Politics of Austerity.” *New Labor Forum* 22, no. 3 (2013): 46-53, 3.

yield cash flows, which are especially attractive in stagnant markets where interest rates are low.⁶⁶

Another concern regards private maintenance or operational contracts for publicly-owned facilities. In certain cases contracts may terminate after a period, leaving cities with depreciated assets and inflated maintenance costs that lead to infrastructure decline and begin a process of neglect.⁶⁷ In a case regarding a toll road in California, restrictive clauses akin to a non-compete precluded additional road repair along non-toll sections of the highway. Need for repairs forced the state to exit the contract early, costing them over \$200 million.⁶⁸

While I agree with these concerns, it is important to not overlook the fact that government policy, regulation and public transparency rules often seem designed to create equity and protect the general welfare, may just as easily support private lobbies and interests. We hear this argument all the time in regards to Federal lawmakers and corporate lobbies seeking incentives. But even at the local and municipal level, bidding processes and procurement guidelines readily favor larger firms. Insurance and labor requirements attached to contractors, may appear to protect workers and government funds, but they also favor a network of larger companies and disproportionately discriminate against smaller businesses and Minority Women Business Enterprises (MWBE). These smaller businesses and MWBEs can be structurally excluded from construction bids and instead are

⁶⁶ Sclar, "Looting," 49.

⁶⁷ Sclar, "Looting," 3.

⁶⁸ Sclar, "Looting," 48.

relegated to subcontractor roles where they serve to help meet diversity requirements but take on a burden of increased financial risk. When the primary contractor either withholds contingencies across a larger project or utilizes unfavorable payment terms, then smaller, minority subcontractors can face cash flow issues.

In the following chapters I will consider case studies that reflect many of these concerns about PPP. In chapter three I look at the case of Harmony Oaks, an affordable housing complex set to start construction in New Orleans immediately following the financial collapse. There, the failure of AIG meant that a financial firm was suddenly needed to back affordable housing credits. Goldman Sachs pledged \$56 million in tax-credit equity backed by a federal programing called the Gulf Opportunity Zone provided for disaster relief in New Orleans. To be clear, there is nothing legally or ethically wrong with this arrangement per say, but it is a case of a private equity firm with access to upfront capital placed a low risk investment and garnering returns from a set-aside fund for disaster relief.⁶⁹ A case I consider in chapter four regards a \$1 billion light rail construction in Minneapolis and St. Paul. In this case a private consortium of funders pressured the city to raise its MWBE contracting goals and create additional workforce training opportunities that increased the bidding capacity of minority contractors and resulted in many of these construction firms receiving lucrative contracts when the city began its next big project of building the US Bank Stadium.

⁶⁹ Reckdahl, Katy. "Excerpt: The Long Road from C.J. Peete to Harmony Oaks." *Shelterforce: The Voice of Community Development*. October 14, 2013.

My larger concern here is that PPPs can divide accountability to the public welfare or to a local communities across several private stakeholders, ultimately making no single group accountable to anyone. Complex private partnerships with divided responsibilities toward the management and oversight of large projects can lead to a lack of transparency and distance between the authorities and the communities who are subject to their decisions. In chapter three I will look more closely at the case of Harmony Oaks, a \$173 million housing redevelopment project in New Orleans following the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina. This project brought together a host of public and private partners to create new housing. In this case, the public housing authority had significantly lost the public's faith and a private firm, McCormack Baron Salazar (MBS), was contracted to design, construct, and ultimately manage the properties. An additional non-profit agency was contracted to address resident needs, provide social service support and report community concerns to MBS. While this model sought to honor residents with authentic outreach and services, it also subjected them to policy decisions and regulations against their stated desire and created anger in an already fragile community. PPP arrangements can bring tremendous value to communities, create flexible funding structures that better serve community needs, and enable experts, especially in the fields of community development, opportunities to do right by people living in a place. However, PPP can blur the lines of responsibility and accountability and obscure, in the case of Harmony Oaks, the privatization of public

housing, reduction of affordable units, and restrictive management rules that prevented housing residents from returning to their home after the storm.

While I hold in tension these critiques of PPPs, I turn in the next section to examine Creative Placemaking, a cultural model for public private investment used to support infrastructure developments and community livability. Brookings Institute's metro-policy agenda described quality of place as one of the four dimensions needed to build prosperity in a changing American landscape. Their concern that stimulus funding wasn't achieving the goals set by their metro-policy agenda was caused by what they considered an ineffective deployment of block grants to state and country governments. As government also became more partisan they proposed that a field composed of federal and foundations could better "disseminate learning and innovation in a structured way."⁷⁰ Creative Placemaking is a unique corollary to the metro-policy agenda.

Creative Placemaking

Creative Placemaking is a PPP that brings private investment into public infrastructure development, and seeks to make government and the non-profit community development sectors more responsive to quality of places concerns. Quality of place concerns tend to have two directions, one regards economic development and the capacity of cities to attract workforce talent through creative economy and lifestyle. The other regards community development and the plausibility of creating better life outcomes for poor communities through economic,

⁷⁰ Muro et al., "Implementing ARRA," 13.

cultural, and environmental transformation. Balanced between economic development and community development, creative placemaking becomes a driving force of an emerging cultural economy.

As billions in stimulus dollars were flooding into federal agencies, newly appointed NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman told the New York Times, “If we’re going to have any traction at all...there has to be a place for [the NEA] in domestic policy.”⁷¹ Later that year, the NEA presented its *Creative Placemaking* white paper at the Mayors’ Institute on City Design in partnership with the United States Conference of Mayors and the American Architectural Foundation. The white paper argued for “a new policy platform” that could “link creative actors from multiple sectors, local agency missions, and levels of government in a visible and concerted initiative to encourage creative placemaking and cultural industry innovation.”⁷² The white paper solidly turned the NEA toward the project of urbanization by stimulating public private partnerships and attracting private equity to urbanism.

In July 2011, the NEA announced its inaugural set of Our Town grants, distributing \$6.5 million into 51 communities in 34 states to support the arts “as part of a community revitalization strategy.”⁷³ Unique to the Our Town program was the explicit requirement of a partnership between local government and art and design

⁷¹ Pogreman, Robin. “New Endowment Chairman Sees Arts as an Economic Engine.” *The New York Times*, August 7, 2009.

⁷² Markusen and Gadwa, *Creative Placemaking*.

⁷³ National Endowment for the Arts. “NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman Announces Inaugural Our Town Grants.” News. July 12, 2011.

organizations. Over the last eight years, funds have been spent on cultural planning and asset mapping, creative entrepreneurship, public art, cultural facilities, public infrastructure, and festivals.⁷⁴ Landesman claimed, at the time, that this new funding mechanism strengthened the arts while “shaping the social, physical, and economic characters of their neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions.”⁷⁵ It also opened the floodgates for private foundation investment in creative placemaking.

Only a couple of months after the announcement of the Our Town grants, Artplace America publicized its ten-year venture capital investment into the arts, community, and economic development fields with an initial \$11.5 million in funding and \$12 million in private bank loans to 34 projects in 20 states (i.e approximately \$350,000 per project). Called an “unprecedented public private collaboration,” according to press releases, ArtPlace created a partnership between seven federal departments—including Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Education and Transportation, White House Office of Management and Budget and the Domestic Policy Council—six national banks, and ten initial foundations, including the Kresge Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation among others.

NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman described ArtPlace as a mechanism for “accelerating placemaking,”⁷⁶ and like Our Town, ArtPlace grants evaluated projects

⁷⁴National Endowment for the Arts. “Our Town Grantees.”
<https://www.arts.gov/national/our-town/grantees/type>.

⁷⁵ NEA, “NEA Chairman.”

⁷⁶ Pogreman, “New Endowment Chairman.”

based on formal partnerships between cultural non-profits, municipal departments, economic, and community development agencies. Ford Foundation president Luis A. Ubiñas, described ArtPlace as a “new paradigm” whose “integrated, interwoven approach has the potential to kick-start local economies and transform communities.”⁷⁷ These pronouncements by foundation leaders reveal a fundamental belief that private interest, capital investment, and government policy should align with urban development through a cultural planning approach. This rapidly evolving role for cultural strategies in urban development illustrates a new capacity, usefulness, and expediency for art and artists in America’s cultural economy.

In 2014, Artplace underwent a major leadership transition that dramatically moved the focus, and the focus of the creative placemaking field from issues of economic development toward concerns of equity, diversity, and community development. The foundation shifted its evaluation and measurement structure from metrics that sought to show the effects of ArtPlace funding on the vitality of commercial economies to a matrix that positioned grantees as part of a consortium of social sector partnerships addressing sector’s needs like public safety, housing, environment, and social justice.

In connection with this turn toward community development, ArtPlace expanded its grants program. In 2014-15 it placed \$18 million into the non-profit community development sector through six, \$3 million Community Development Investment grants given to Community Development Corporations (CDCs).

⁷⁷ Knight Foundation. “Five Knight New Work Winners will Share in \$500,000 to Bring Bold Ideas for Dance, Theater and Music to Life.” Press. December 3, 2018.

ArtPlace's investment focus included a native housing authority in the state of Alaska, a public park conservancy in Philadelphia, PA a medical resources facility in Jackson, MS, a Japanese cultural service center in Los Angeles, CA, an affordable housing partnership in Minneapolis, and a tribal youth center in Zuni, NM. CDCs traditionally hold the space of non-profit, service sector, community development. Typically supporting of low income communities, CDCs may help coordinate job training, social service deployment, educational opportunities, and real estate development. In certain cases, a CDC like Self Help in Durham operates as a non-profit credit lender providing low interest loans for underserved individuals, families, small businesses, and nonprofits. ArtPlace's investments spread resources into a broad geographical swath of the community development sector in housing, youth development, ethnic cultural, and quality of life resources, and through these sought to support the incorporation of artists and arts practices by these agencies and the communities they support.

In conjunction with funding, ArtPlace hosts annual summits and regional placemaking conferences and conducts research that seeks to distinguish impact and best practices for the field. The annual summits built relationships between community and nonprofit practitioners, foundation funders, metropolitan, state, and federal officials, and artists. Through panels, discussions, even equity training, this emerging professional field began exploring topics from anti-displacement strategies and community storytelling to crowdsource fundraising and real estate development. While building professional field, ArtPlace has also commissioned its own field

research. In the last few years it has produced surveys of grantee work in the areas of environment and energy, housing, public safety, transportation, and health. These research based field scans assembled working groups of practitioners who helped outline structural issues of each sector and considered ways that artists and community organizations address sector issues differently than traditional social service agencies.⁷⁸ The *Placemaking and Public Safety* field scan, for example, considers projects included a pop-up marketplace in Alameda County, California used to “rebuild” community-police relations, a youth clubhouse in Brooklyn that addressed neighborhood crime, and an inactive railroad line in Milwaukee, WI that sought to foster crime prevention through intra-neighborhood relationships.⁷⁹ Most interesting of these approaches is the People’s Paper Co-Op (PPC) in Philadelphia, a project that was developed at Philadelphia’s Village of Arts and Humanities, a thirty year-old art and community development project in North Philadelphia.

The People’s Paper Co-Op offers a criminal record expungement program that partners lawyers with formerly convicted clients to have criminal records legally expunged. Routine background checks make these records an ongoing barriers to employment for past offenders and their expungement is correlated with indicators of longer term financial stability.⁸⁰ After the records are expunged, clients work with PPC to transform a printed version of their record. First the record is shredded,

⁷⁸ Hand, Jamie. “Research Field Scans Update.” ArtPlace, October 14, 2015.

⁷⁹ ArtPlace. “Public Safety.” <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/public-safety>.

⁸⁰ Esthappan, Sino. *Art Beyond Bars: A Case Study of the People’s Paper Co-op in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, September 2018.

turned to pulp, and transformed into a clean sheet of hand made paper that clients then embed with a “reverse mugshot” created by transposing polaroid film onto the paper. Clients then journal a response to the prompt, “Without my criminal record, I am...”

The communicative act of writing one’s own identity, combined with the experience of erasing and transfiguring their criminal record, both legally and materially, attends to the social, psychological, and legal conditions of a structural prejudice toward formerly incarcerated people. As an artwork, PPC material and social elements are aesthetically and conceptually woven with punk and activist printmaking practices. As a creative placemaking project, PPC is site-specific and community centered, and transforms the expungement clinics into sites of critical reflection and engagement, not only legal service. At these clinics, PPC runs their Reentry Think Tank, which is working with formerly incarcerated individuals to create a “Reentry Bill of Rights.”⁸¹ They invite clients to respond to interpersonal questions like “When people look at your criminal record, what about you as a human being do you wish they saw?” as well as needs based questions that ask clients to design resources for other formerly incarcerated. This kind of art practice fits naturally into an existing field of dialogical social practices, but takes as its site of intervention both the physical clinic and the justice system as its place creative and critical interruption.⁸²

⁸¹ Esthappen, *Art Behind Bars*, 4.

⁸² Esthappen, *Art Behind Bars*, 7.

ArtPlace is expressly ending its funding in 2020, and it is yet unclear how its resources and networks will be redirected. Since its founding ArtPlace has funded 279 projects in 208 communities, each demonstrating geographically specific partnership consortiums built around art, culture, and economic development.⁸³ In concert with ArtPlace, a host of other placemaking funding initiatives have emerged. These include the Knight Foundation's Knight Arts Challenge initiating creative placemaking funds in their eight charter cities, with \$165 million in arts support since 2005 in Miami, Florida alone.⁸⁴ The foundation's 2019 focus on art and technology signals continued attention on the relation between cultural support and innovation economies. Bloomberg Philanthropy's Public Art Challenge, launched in 2014, is notable for its \$1 million grant awards and its focus on temporary public art as an economic and social stimulus effort. Its awards support communities creating at the intersection of art and environment, food security, water rights, and public safety. Funds support internationally recognized artists like Kara Walker and Theaster Gates doing place-based community development in small and very impoverished cities like Jackson, Mississippi, Gary Indiana, and Spartanburg, South Carolina. These projects are still forthcoming, but as I will discuss in chapter five, the work around food justice in Jackson is well positioned in terms of the needs of the community.

⁸³ ArtPlace. "National Creative Placemaking Fund: Introduction."
<https://www.artplaceamerica.org/our-work/national-creative-placemaking-fund/introduction>.

⁸⁴ Knight Foundation. "Knight Foundation Invests."

Conclusions

What stimulus funding struggled to achieve, creative placemaking investments helped do by quickening the adoption of cross-sector strategies and public private partnerships in metropolitan regions. By design, creative placemaking hastens the adoption of “innovative” approaches through place-based, cultural programs that attract capital and increase value in divested, urban areas. This occurs in both economic and community development contexts. With economic development, creative placemaking seeks to attract to the creative economy resources (i.e. arts, cultural, and entertainment products) through the activation of a public space. With community development, creative placemaking seeks to retain the functions and inputs (i.e. infrastructure, family, and social services) that compose neighborhoods in order to serve community needs and reduce disparity. When applied to a gentrifying urban centers, art has the power to attract outside capital and concentrate wealth through forms of aesthetic vibrancy that generate consumption, tourism, and increasing land values. When applied to low-income areas, art has the power to retain community and design spaces where community values are expressed, resources activated, and needs identified and demanded.

In 2013-2014 ArtPlace, and other placemaking funders funded two projects in Philadelphia. Spruce Street Harbor Park and the Villages of Arts and Humanities are examples of placemaking directed toward economic and community development respectively. Spruce Street Harbor Park (fig. 2) was a two month summer pop up park (now seasonally ongoing) along the Delaware River, just outside Center City

Philadelphia. It contains a river boardwalk, urban beach, fountains, and public art. Lights hang from the trees and hammocks made of recycled plastic swing over patches of grass. A series of floating barges with music stages alongside a lily pad garden, pop-up restaurants, and bars attract Philadelphians and tourists to the river's edge.⁸⁵ The park attracts upwards of 175,000 people each season⁸⁶ to what Jetsetter.com describes as “summer-festival-meets-urban-beach-mash-up.”⁸⁷



⁸⁵ Greenie, Michael. “River Stage.” ArtPlace, June 3, 2014. <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/funded-projects/river-stage-waterfront/blog/delaware-river-waterfront-corp-river-stage-waterfront-0>.

⁸⁶ “Spruce Street Harbor Park.” Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spruce_Street_Harbor_Park.

⁸⁷ Beard, Rachel. “World’s Best Urban Beaches.” Jetsetter, July 15, 2014. <https://www.jetsetter.com/magazine/worlds-best-urban-beaches/?nm=linkbin#038:cl=9>.



Figure 2: Spruce Street Harbor Park. Images from @sprucestreetharborpark

Four miles north, on the edges of Temple University in North Philadelphia is the Villages of Arts and Humanities, an urban neighborhood operating within and among a low-income community in North Philadelphia. The Village (fig. 3,4) consists of 15 art parks and 10 restored buildings interspersed among businesses and public housing. Projects like the People's Paper Co-op operated out of the Village's creative campus.⁸⁸ The area's business corridor is brightly painted, an aesthetic touch made as part of an economic development plan designed by the neighborhood in partnership with Philadelphia city corridor management, clean streets, business services, and workforce development programs. Founded in 1986,

⁸⁸ The Village of Arts and Humanities. "Home." <http://villagearts.org/>.

the Villages is both a neighborhood and an ongoing community revitalization project standing in for a business improvement district and neighborhood association when no such organizations were present. At the Villages, “art is used as a vehicle to create place, build self-esteem, and engender mutual respect [through] a series of interconnected programs, built through an “organic,” grassroots democratic process, serving neighborhood youth and adults.” Founder Lily Yeh describes it as a “A living piece of sculpture, in which sculpture is a communal event.”⁸⁹



Figure 3: Murals and sculptures at the Villages of Art and Humanities

⁸⁹ Wener, Richard. *Placemaking for Change: 2001 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. Cambridge, MA: Bruner Foundation Inc., 2001. 3.



Figure 4: Painted business facades at the Villages of Art and Humanities

It could be considered that these places are just two examples of divergent strategies composing the creative placemaking field. Each is inclusive and engaging in their own way, and site specific in how they address opportunities, needs and demands of the place. In fact these projects share common placemaking tropes, which is what makes their different strategies and values so challenging to untie. It is important to distinguish the tropes and how they are valued differently in different contexts. Placemaking strategies can situate power differently among communities, organize public space and express civic demands differently, determine the pace and order of community needs differently, all of which results in vastly different expressions of intentionality, equity, and function of a place.

In the closing plenary session at ArtPlace's 2015 Summit held in Philadelphia, Rip Rapson, President of the Kresge Foundation, moderates a conversation

between Laura Sparks, President of the William Penn Foundation, Aviva Kapust, Executive Director of the Villages of Arts and Humanities, and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter.⁹⁰ The conversation turns sharply on the issues of creative placemaking as economic development versus community development, and very specifically around the distinctions between Spruce Street Harbor Park and The Villages. Throughout the conversation various placemaking tropes are evoked, including exposure, engagement, accessibility, ownership, creative economy, needs, and social design.

Tropes like exposure, access, and engagement feature differently in the two projects. In Spruce Street Harbor Park, the terms of accessibility are a combined significance of consumer access (i.e. craft food and drink), physical access (i.e. transportation and ability), and social access, (i.e. social barriers of entry, cultural differences, and racial and class diversity). In a project like the park, accessibility supports exposure. Both Nutter and Spark contend that people drawn to the park for food and drink will then be exposed to art, which is a positive and impactful experience. Moreover, this art is focused around designed social interaction which supports empathy and builds forms of intentional engagement within a larger public. Sparks contends that fostering these skills in the city at large is the first step to creating the political imperative and civic attention to issues of equity and disparity. However, it is arguable whether popular consumption is the most effective way to get people to a position of political and social awareness of inequity.

⁹⁰ ArtPlace. “#ArtPlaceSummit 2015: Sustaining the Momentum.” Filmed in Philadelphia, PA. Video, 1:12:49. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53Y2_GICrHQ&feature=youtu.be.

In relation to the Villages, however, access, exposure, and engagement operate differently and support different values. Mayor Nutter contends access to arts, like visits to a museum or murals in a neighborhood, creates exposure that elevates people's capacity and desire toward education, especially those living in low income neighborhoods, which increases capacities to overcome structural barriers. "It is a little tougher to problem solve or be creative if you struggle to read."

⁹¹ Here Kapust's critique is sharp. Access and exposure to the arts, she contends, is only meaningful if they are expressly identified by the community as a need. She argues that any cultural project that aims to address a community problem must first come from a need identified expressly by that community, not for the community. She criticizes public art projects like murals and parks that are developed externally and then given to the community as a form of engagement, access, and exposure through a so called meaningful and community building process. "I don't want to spend my time figuring out how to get people to agree [on a mural]. I want to figure out how to get people to the table to figure out what they want and need, which requires that you inspire a sense of belonging to a space first so that they can even imagine they might be talking for a reason that will deliver action."⁹² Here, creative placemaking is not the work of creating public art, but the tool that creates the belonging, trust, and intentionality around community spaces necessary for collective empowerment and action. This design for social change can be seen in

⁹¹ ArtPlace. "#ArtPlaceSummit 2015." 41:43.

⁹² ArtPlace. "#ArtPlaceSummit 2015." 58:40.

the work of PPC and Re-entry Think Tank which attends to an expressed need of a community navigating re-entry, and there providing a format to identify the next need, either personally or for the community. Moreover, placemaking projects involved in community development create forms of belonging and attachment to spaces. Within places authentically controlled and invested in by communities that people identify need and demand change. As Kapust states, “I haven’t heard anyone concerned [in my community] in what we are going to be doing for Center City in terms of the Arts.”⁹³

One could argue that creating attachment to a place is shared across both projects, but toward what end and for whom? Addressing the value of Spruce Harbor Park, Laura Sparks conflates consumer and community in her description of the efforts made by foundations over time to develop “constituency, customers, and demand for those amenities on the Delaware [River].” Through this process of developing constituency as customer and public demand as evidence of political and commercial profitability she states that the community “took hold of, owned it, and advocated for public access.” Her acknowledgement is critical. It accepts the fact that foundations involved in placemaking as economic development see a role for cultivating communities into consumers in order that those people may politically advocate for new commercial services as cultural experiences. Transforming the civic body into consumer advocate through tropes of access, exposure, and

⁹³ ArtPlace. “#ArtPlaceSummit 2015,” 14:46.

belonging are common process in a cultural economy that has realigned its power through placemaking.

Kapust counters that the concept of placemaking has many more important benefits for society than simply using art to develop commercial public spaces. “We know how to do that work,” she argues, “We do not know how to do the work of solving deep poverty that exists in Philadelphia through arts” Aviva’s point is practical and powerful. If a field of placemaking is being built by the country’s largest foundations and government agencies, it is essential that the field design tools for achieving new societal outcomes, not for rebranding a creative economy. For placemaking to actually be innovative in reshaping the environmental and social conditions affecting people living along a divested Main Street, its practitioners must understand its tropes, be intentional with their deployment, and most importantly design a process where the focus is on creating places by communities for themselves within which they feel agency to state their needs and make demands.

In the following two chapters I consider two predominant and paradigmatic placeforms where placemaking is being deployed to direct and define related urbanization processes. In chapter three, I look at concentration as a placeform. In this chapter I examine place-based policies that support patterns of concentration and deconcentration of people and resources, specifically in relation to housing and urban redevelopment. I frame the differences in how these policies emerge in the recovery period by distinguishing two kinds of concentrated placeforms, emerging

innovation districts and mixed-use affordable housing in places of concentrated poverty.

In chapter four, I address livability as a placeform. In this chapter I examine how metrics used to measure social and economic conditions are used as tools to both indicate and produce more holistic social and economic value in the places people live. Here, I look at a case where placemaking is applied to transportation development in order to effect change in local communities, businesses, and residences. In both chapters I relate how the federal government's unified strategy seeks to foster greater intersection among sectors, foundation, government, and cultural resources, most often with the effect of increasing privatization in social sectors.

Chapter 3 | Concentration as Placeforms

Introduction

It was little source of comfort in the months following Hurricane Katrina when Federal Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson told the Houston Chronicle, “Whether we like it or not, New Orleans is not going to be 500,000 people for a long time. New Orleans is not going to be as black as it was for a long time, if ever again.”⁹⁴ It was even more distressing to New Orleans public housing residents the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) erected steel barriers over doors and windows of residents’ properties and filed applications with HUD to demolish all of New Orleans’s Big Four public housing communities, many of which sustained only minor damage from the hurricane.⁹⁵

In an effort to remedy the loss of housing for an estimated 5000 still displaced public housing residents, the House of Representatives passed the Gulf Coast Hurricane Housing Recovery Act of 2007. The house bill demanded that HANO make at least 3000 affordable units available for occupancy to former tenants by August 1, 2007, and prohibited HANO from “demolishing or disposing of any public

⁹⁴ Rodriguez, Lori and Zeke Minaya, “HUD Chief Doubts New Orleans Will Be As Black.” *Houston Chronicle*, September 29, 2005.

⁹⁵ National Housing Law Project. National Housing Law Project to Alphonso Jackson and Ainars Rodins, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC, August 31, 2007.

housing dwelling unit...except pursuant to a replacement plan.”⁹⁶ The bill ordered HANO to conduct a survey to locate displaced tenants, provide occupancy in available housing, and ensure tenants’ “right of return.”⁹⁷ The House bill was referred to the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee but was never brought to a vote.

Speaking from the House floor in December of 2007, California Representative Maxine Waters informed the House that HANO had moved forward with its plans for demolition. She called on President George W. Bush, House and Senate leadership to prevent the demolition. She concluded her remarks with a statement that attested to the continued need for public housing and the fear and distrust among housing residents that their communities and lives did not matter.⁹⁸

People are still living in FEMA’s trailers. And to think that they would dismantle 4,500 units of public housing is unconscionable when people are looking for places to live...There were rumors following Rita and Katrina that perhaps some people wanted to change the make-up of New Orleans. Some people wanted to get rid of the poor people and thought that all of that city should really become the tourist attraction with all of the hotels and the gambling and all of the other things, and workers should live outside and not inside New Orleans. And some people think that they are carrying out that kind of a mission and that kind of program. I would just ask the Secretary to not demolish these public housing units. It is Christmas time. To give to the people of New Orleans a Christmas present of tearing down these units is unconscionable.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ US Congress. *Gulf Coast Hurricane Housing Recovery Act of 2007*. 110 Congress. H.R. 1227 (February, 28, 2007) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/house-bill/1227>.

⁹⁷ H.R.1227 - Gulf Coast Hurricane Housing Recovery Act of 2007.

⁹⁸ Public Housing in New Orleans. 110 Cong., Congressional Record pt. 1: H16797-16805. (December 18, 2007)

⁹⁹ Public Housing in New Orleans. 110 Cong., Congressional Record pt. 1: H16797-16805.

Despite impassioned speeches, legislation, legal action, accusations of racism, and public protests, demolition began following a vote by the New Orleans City Council in January, 2008. However, groundbreaking on CJ Peete, one of the Big Four housing complexes, did not begin until a year later, and former residents, of which only a small amount returned, did not move in until 2012.¹⁰⁰

In Durham, North Carolina, a different kind of redevelopment effort was underway. In 2004, Jim Goodman, the president of Capitol Broadcasting, which owns media outlets throughout North Carolina's Raleigh-Durham Metropolitan Area, bought the abandoned 14.6 acre American Tobacco Campus located on the outskirts of a mostly shuttered downtown. Goodman's vision was to rehabilitate the historic property and turn it into an entrepreneurial, tech, and commercial center that would help drive redevelopment in Durham and throughout the Raleigh-Durham Metropolitan region.¹⁰¹ The Durham plant was originally built in 1874 by the American Tobacco Company, and was the center of a growing cigarette industry. The plant excelled due to its early adoption of tobacco rolling machines and grew to consolidate over 200 rival companies until it was broken up by federal antitrust legislation in the early 1900s.¹⁰² Antitrust forced competition and subsequent regulation on advertising led American Tobacco to diversify its holdings, and it left

¹⁰⁰ Reckdahl, Katy. "Excerpt: The Long Road from C.J. Peete to Harmony Oaks."

¹⁰¹ "American Tobacco Historic District." Wikipedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Tobacco_Historic_District.

¹⁰² "American Tobacco Historic District." Wikipedia.

Durham and the plant shuttered in 1987.¹⁰³ In 2000 the property was registered in the national landmark of historic registry, and over the next 15 years, 10 parcels of the Tobacco Campus were purchased by Goodman for an estimated \$26,077,000. Today, the combined assessed value of land and property is \$165,435,472, an over 600% appreciation in value.¹⁰⁴

What makes the American Tobacco Campus an interesting redevelopment case is the way that it created a hub, or concentration, of educational, commercial, and tech assets in downtown Durham that were otherwise spread out among the larger metropolitan area. The Council for Entrepreneurial Development (CED) was one of the early tenants in the newly redeveloped property. CED had been operating for over 30 years in the Raleigh-Durham Research Triangle Park (RTP) serving as a networking agency connecting companies and researchers in the park with venture capital. RTP is one of the world's largest research parks and home to 200 companies, 50,000 workers, and 10,000 contractors working in high paid tech and pharmaceutical companies like IBM, GlaxoSmithKline, and Cisco Systems.¹⁰⁵ The creation of a satellite office at the American Tobacco Campus signaled a connection between a longstanding industry cluster concentrated at RTP with downtown Durham's urban revitalization efforts. From CED emerged the American Underground, a start-up incubator that, like CED, connects early stage tech

¹⁰³ *American Underground: A Startup Incubator in Durham, North Carolina*. Charlottesville: Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia, 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Durham County Tax Administration Record Search. "318 Blackwell Street, American Campus LLC." <https://property.spatalest.com/nc/durham/#/property/196662>.

¹⁰⁵ "Research Triangle Park." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_Triangle_Park.

entrepreneurs with venture capital. The American Underground organized programming and co-working office space for a growing membership of highly educated tech entrepreneurs. American Underground's community-focused approach aimed to connect like-minded entrepreneurs with Durham's transforming downtown community of educational, professional, social, commercial, and increasingly residential assets.¹⁰⁶ In their 2016-17 annual report, the American Underground accounts for its success in the accumulated value of 608 jobs and \$34.9 million of investments in its members' start-up companies, and almost \$2 million of additional spending by members in the proximate Durham economy.¹⁰⁷ Those measures of success, including increasing property value, increasing concentrations of investment capital and tech-oriented workforce talent, and related spending at surrounding properties and businesses is not only central to American Tobacco Campus' success, but also the metropolitan policy model for innovation clusters and place-based redevelopment.

These two cases suggest that at the turn of the 21st century an evolving, interdependent, but also destructive pattern of concentration and deconcentration of both people and resources (i.e., capital, property, markets, and socio-economic relationships) was re-shaping the American landscape. The story of HANO following Hurricane Katrina is an extreme example of the deconcentration of areas of concentrated poverty and the associated eradication of affordable housing. The

¹⁰⁶ *American Underground: A Startup Incubator in Durham, North Carolina.*

¹⁰⁷ American Underground. "Press" Last accessed May 1, 2019.
<https://americanunderground.com/press/>.

development of ATC in Durham illustrates a national trend of creating innovation clusters, concentrations of people and knowledge-based industries, in former industrial cores driving the revitalization of cities and most often leading to the displacement of previously concentrated poor populations. The vitriol and peril experienced by New Orleans Housing residents, the public demolition, and subsequent community-engaged, privately-financed, rebuilding effort fits a decades old pattern of public derision toward public housing, the displacement of its people, and the privatization of public housing. ATC fits a congruent pattern, albeit new to this century's renewal process and obscured by the positive terms of economic growth. Instead of condemning blighted property, abandoned factories in declining neighborhoods are admired as hidden gems, full of potential. Accolades and tax-subsidy are given to the predominantly white developers who are praised for bringing economic vitality and creative community to a so called desolate place. At the same time, poor, predominantly communities of color living in surrounding neighborhoods experience the pressure of increasing property tax, rent burden, and policing that creates further instability in their neighborhoods.

The City of Durham's report on affordable housing for 2016-2021 documents a growing and "significant shortage of affordable rental housing for very-low income households and rapidly rising housing costs in many historically affordable communities."¹⁰⁸ Numerous news articles in Durham attest to an affordability crisis

¹⁰⁸ *City of Durham Affordable Housing Goals 2016-2021*. Durham: Durham Housing Authority, 2016. <https://durhamnc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12522/Housing-Goals-Report?bidId=>.

facing the city.¹⁰⁹ Durham City Council member Jillian Johnson revealed that "We're building for the whiter, richer new people that are moving to town...We're not building grocery stores and pharmacies and banks in east Durham, and that's what we need to be building."¹¹⁰ While the relationship between economic development and displacement is roughly understood and commonly experienced, few policies or punditry in the media present a comprehensive approach to the advancement of industry and the protection, let alone advancement, of poor communities.

The 2000 census illustrated the concentration of various socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial groups, industry type, and educational attainment in metropolitan areas across the US. Among shifting demographic and labor patterns, the census showed that the traditional socioeconomic divides of urban and suburban poor was also changing. The gap between center city and suburban poverty rates narrowed in 2000 with the share of urban poor remaining steady while poor populations in the suburbs increased. Additionally, the total number of poor people living in suburbs surpassed urban populations between 2000 and 2007 by over 1.5 million people nationwide.¹¹¹ The 2008 housing crisis accelerated these conditions by increasing the number of poor people living in suburban areas, widening income inequality and income and racial segregation, all while increasing opportunities for commercial

¹⁰⁹ Vaughn, Dawn. "Durham in an 'affordable housing crisis,' council members say." *The Herald Sun*, March 21, 2018.

¹¹⁰ Willets, Sarah. "Mayor Bill Bell Has Overseen a Bull City Renaissance. So Why Has Durham's Poverty Rate Gone Up on His Watch?" *Indy Weekly*, June 14, 2017. <https://indyweek.com/news/mayor-bill-bell-overseen-bull-city-renaissance.-durham-s-poverty-rate-gone-watch>.

¹¹¹ Frey, William and Alan Berube, Audrey Singer, Jill H. Wilson. *Getting Current: Recent Demographic Trends in Metropolitan America*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, March, 2009.

redevelopment in urban cores.¹¹² Housing policy experts warned that increasing concentrations of poverty were compounding health, income, housing, and wealth disparities in metropolitan regions and deepening systemic issues of housing and social service access for by people living below the poverty line.¹¹³

Industry policy analysts identified industry clusters, particularly technology and medical industries, as positively increasing concentrations of highly educated workforce talent. Overall the number of Americans with college degrees has increased by 8% from 1990 to 2007, and those with at least a highschool diploma rose from 75% to 85% over the same time. However, the highest concentration of those with college degrees remain clustered in the coastal states, while the highest concentration of those without high school diplomas is most concentrated across the Southern United States, Appalachia, and inland California.¹¹⁴ These concentrations of people with higher levels of educational attainment happen in relation to the “outflow” from areas with less education, and typically into metro areas with industry clusters in “knowledge economies” like technology, pharmaceuticals, and medicine.

¹¹⁵ However, increasing concentration of industry and education are not simply draining certain regions of educated talent, but there is a corresponding increase in immigrant populations without high school educations in Southern and Southwestern

¹¹² Kneebone, Elizabeth and Emily Garr. *The Landscape of Recession: Unemployment and Safety Net Services Across Urban and Suburban America*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, July 2009.

¹¹³ Kneebone, Elizabeth. *The Great Recession and Poverty in Metropolitan America*.

¹¹⁴ Frey, Williams, 16.

¹¹⁵ Frey, Williams, 16.

state. Together this creates a significant imbalance in education, skills, jobs, industry, as well as other political and world views.¹¹⁶

In a 2008 speech to the US Conference of Mayors, then candidate and Senator Barack Obama addressed both industry and affordable housing in the context of renewed urban development strategies. He previewed to the assembly of mayors how a unified strategy among federal agencies working across sectors could address infrastructure needs, spur job growth, strengthen neighborhoods, and decrease disparity.¹¹⁷ However, the unified strategies and associated federal programs and policies designed by the White House Office of Urban Affairs often resulted in many other kinds of deconcentrating effects. These include the eradication of affordable housing units, displacement of very-low income populations, and instability and uneven distribution of social safety net services, which created greater disparities, especially for the lowest bracket of low income populations.

In this chapter I consider two policy narratives--innovation clusters and concentrated poverty--operating interdependently and concerned with concentration in metropolitan placeform. Concentrated poverty relates to the history, values, and policies addressing affordable housing development, transportation, and social service networks serving geographically dense populations of people living below the poverty line. Innovation clusters relate to the history, values, and policies that

¹¹⁶ Metropolitan Policy Program. *Blueprint for American Prosperity*.

¹¹⁷ Barack Obama, "Speech to the U.S. Conference of Mayors," *C-Span* video, June 21, 2008, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?206123-2/obama-speech-mayors>.

regard the attraction and concentration of resources, infrastructures, and knowledge-based/advanced industries and workforces into revitalized urban cores. At stake in both is an organized and interdependent concentration and displacement of people and communities, often sharing proximate geographies that results in increasing disruption and instability for low-income individuals produced alongside the revitalization of urban cores and development of advanced industry sties following decades of industrial decline.

This analysis of innovation clusters and concentrated poverty examines the continued bifurcation of economic and community development narratives as they each promote forms of a concentration and deconcentration of communities, and work interdependently toward this aim. As Durham Council Member Johnson told Durham's Indy Week,

When I have asked people, 'Was there a consideration of issues like gentrification and displacement and racial equity when this city decided to start pouring a ton of public money into revitalizing downtown,' what folks have told me is, 'Well, at the time we just wanted to get anyone to invest anything in downtown,'" she says. "As if they didn't have the luxury of thinking about things like racial equity and people being displaced down the line."¹¹⁸

In this chapter I explore how the economic development narratives surrounding urban revitalization focused on innovation, urban lifestyle, and creative economy, also support the concentration of asset-rich people and industries moving into formerly asset-poor urban areas. I consider how an emphasis on place has aided the rebranding of cities and the clustering of knowledge based industries that require strategies for gathering highly educated workforces into revitalizing urban cores. At

¹¹⁸ Willets, Sarah. "Mayor Bill Bell Has Overseen a Bull City Renaissance. So Why Has Durham's Poverty Rate Gone Up on His Watch?"

the same time I consider the material and economic conditions that have driven the decline of larger industrial infrastructures and how those same infrastructures are now ripe for investment by knowledge based, creative economies. Furthermore, I look at how the housing market crisis was used to capitalize on depressed real estate to create attractive places for recruiting talent.

In contrast, I consider how narratives around urban poverty have traditionally focused on concerns for affordable housing, and have over time developed deficit narratives that both vilify poor people and the communities they live in. These narratives have long driven community development strategies that seek to alleviate the conditions of poverty by deconcentrating concentrations of poor people and creating mixed-income, privately owned communities. A new, more unified strategy, developed under the White House Office of Urban Affairs, sought to attract public and private partners to affordable housing development by integrating social services and community resources with housing development. Federal programs like the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI) attracted foundation funding and private equity to deploy social service resources and community engaged strategies (i.e. job training, health services, tenant resources, and community planning) as part of a more holistic approach to creating healthy, affordable housing. In the attempt to demonstrate a unified model for building housing, these projects further incentivized privatization and decreased access to affordable housing, particularly for the lowest income populations. In this context, I also consider how foundation and government's unified strategy for housing redevelopment, demonstrated a

misunderstanding of how needs had shifted following the financial collapse, and increasing challenges facing poor communities in suburban areas brought on by predatory lending and foreclosures.

In the first section I examine industry clusters and how these places are perceived by policy makers as effective strategies for advancing investment in technology-rich industries and revitalizing low-income areas where economic investment has waned. In the second section I consider anti-poverty and affordable housing policy concerned with the increasing concentration of low income individuals living among high poverty metropolitan areas. I look at how perception and bias facing urban poor creates deficit narratives about these communities that encourage policies of deconcentration and displacement. I will return to the case of the New Orleans affordable housing community and consider the redevelopment of CJ Peete into Harmony Oaks, a mixed-income housing complex created through public private partnerships to develop and manage both property and people.

Throughout each section, I examine how the interrelated conditions, histories and narratives of urban revitalization and affordable housing shape an understanding of place as the country emerges from a financial crisis, precipitated by a mortgage crisis caused by predatory lending practices targeting low-income black and brown communities. These interdependent placeforms, innovation clusters and concentrated poverty, both utilize a notion of place in conjunction with unified strategy applied in both economic and community development terms. How these placeforms are infrastructurally and economically grounded makes clear that these

placeforms are part of a historical continuum of calculated, coordinated, and justified efforts to divest, disrupt, and displace poor communities in order to make property and resources available to higher earning industries and populations. In this light, I remain skeptical of the discourse of place as somehow offering an escape from the social and economic conditions of today.

Innovation Clusters

Metropolitan or Metro-policy addresses the relationship between industry and labor as the primary drivers of urban growth. A metropolitan area is a comprehensive network of capital, labor, residential and associated commercial resources, generally composed of an assembly of geographically clustered cities, suburbs, and counties with relative population densities and related economic and industry sectors. These sectors include medicine, tourism, education, science/technology, and culture. The metropolitan statistical area (MSA) helps measure demographics, economic and commercial production in these areas, which often cross multiple city, county, and even state governances.

For Metro-policy experts at the Brookings Institute, development of metropolitan areas is considered the appropriate scale for place-based revitalization following the 2008 financial collapse. According to their analysis, the economic capacity of metropolitan place is supported by existing concentrations of human capital, specifically educated and skilled labor that is a “prerequisite to income growth, upward mobility, and access to opportunities.”¹¹⁹ Accordingly, the United

¹¹⁹ Metropolitan Policy Program. *Blueprint for American Prosperity*, 6.

States' 363 metro areas combine the necessary assets of infrastructure, human capital, innovation, and quality places that drive economic growth.¹²⁰ Moreover, metropolitan areas contain the best mix of physical, social, and economic assets to rebuild America's industrial base after years of manufacturing decline. According to Brookings's analysis, the 100 largest metro areas only consume 12% of land in the U.S. while holding 65% of the population and 76% of the GDP. Metropolitan areas account for 74% of college graduates due to the significant number of higher education institutions in metropolitan areas, 78% of all patent activity, and 96% of all venture capital funding, creating a concentration of formally educated and well financed people and businesses.¹²¹

A theory of endogenous economic growth grounds this metro policy narrative. Endogenous economic growth can be understood as occurring when an industry cluster (i.e tech, education, medicine industries) innovate a unique resource able to expand otherwise fixed supply and demand metrics. A theory of endogenous economy looks for the multipliers and technological leaps that shift the way business is done rather than seek to identify the small incremental changes in supply and demand that affect industry production. This means, in an economic environment in which property, workforce, or production resources appear limited, a new technology or production process quickly expands the use or efficiency of a fixed resource, thereby increasing supply or decreasing costs of production. The theory assumes that innovations like Ford's assembly line or cigarette rolling machines at American

¹²⁰ Metropolitan Policy Program. *Blueprint for American Prosperity*.

¹²¹ Metropolitan Policy Program. *Blueprint for American Prosperity*.

Tobacco, or today, robotic automation applied in every industry will make production more efficient, cheaper, faster, lower costs, increase production etc, and therefore create additional capacity in labor or in the marketplace.¹²² Paul Romer, currently the Chief Economist and Senior Vice President of the World Bank argued,

Innovation is the key to economic growth and an improved standard of living, and it has driven almost all U.S. economic growth since the Industrial Revolution. No amount of savings and investment, no policy of macroeconomic fine-tuning, no set of tax and spending incentives can generate sustained economic growth unless it is accompanied by the countless large and small discoveries that are required to create more value from a fixed set of natural resources.¹²³

In other words, certain kinds of innovations applied internally to industrial production systems, logistics, and delivery methods can cause significant increases in production and output. In the restricted conditions of economic recovery, bank financing was restricted, deficit spending was restricted, and the housing market faced record number of foreclosures. In this climate of austerity, policy makers sought to influence the flow of capital and investment to metropolitan places with the goal of increasing spatial and economic efficiencies and spurring growth in labor and land use. Innovation clusters like ATC intended to attract highly skilled and educated workforces, independent creative professionals, and networks of financial capital into closely proximate, sector-focused urban districts. Through this clustering of knowledge-based industries, politicians, developers, and policy makers aimed to

¹²² Paul Romer, "The Origins of Endogenous Growth," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 8 (1) (1994): 3-22.

¹²³ Implementing a National Technology Strategy with Self-Organizing Industry Investment Boards," BPEA No. (1993) p. 345.

capitalize on increasingly undervalued property by creating attractive environments for knowledge, tech, and service economies.

The conditions of developing knowledge and service economies clusters like universities, advanced manufacturing, and medical services emerges from a complex and interdependent history of labor and manufacturing. Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s manufacturing and industry relied on railroads and waterways for the movement of goods. Industry development along natural byways created industrial zones in dense urban areas of older cities. Building new rail spurs was expensive, and so only major companies with the capacity to expand operations could access low-priced land in fringe areas of the city. Industrial expansion, like the movement of textile factories to the South, often involved the creation of company towns so that workers could be close to the industry. However the increasing size and strength of trucks during the period between World Wars made it possible for smaller and mid-size manufacturing firms, wishing to expand to larger facilities, to move toward city fringes with lower-cost land. With the advent of automobiles, land and labor became more accessible and inexpensive. Add to this advances in water infrastructure and electrical grids, manufacturing moved further and further from the urban core.¹²⁴ Over time the patterns of industry development depleted resources from city as workforces and infrastructure investments became more dispersed from the urban core.

¹²⁴ Mallach, Alan. *Facing the Urban Challenge: The Federal Government and America's Older Distressed Cities*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, May 2010. 7.

With rapid suburbanization following WWII, manufacturing was further encouraged to move away from city cores by creating industrial zones accessible to workers living in the suburbs. Suburban municipalities and county governments welcomed the increasing populations and larger tax bases. As the national economy grew and trucks became the primary mode of delivery, manufacturing firms wanted to avoid the cost of city congestion with easier access to national roadways. Manufacturing moved further out and into clustered industrial parks. The parks, built along highways that circled cities at greater distance, made the delivery of materials and products more efficient. However, with the sprawl of businesses and populations those circumventing roadways became just as congested, rail access remained limited, and increasing labor costs caused manufacturing to significantly slow.¹²⁵

The decline of manufacturing and the move to industrial parks at the edges of cities affected regions and populations differently. In the 1970's, 22% of Americans were employed in manufacturing, and by 2008 only 8%.¹²⁶ In older industrial areas in the Northeast and along the Great Lakes, cities like Buffalo, NY, Youngstown, OH, Cleveland, OH, and Detroit, MI, experienced gradual industry decline over decades, significantly depleting industry jobs and populations from city centers. Dayton, Ohio, for example, has lost 46% of its manufacturing jobs since the 1970's; Detroit lost almost 40%. As plants closed, people moved out of cities, children of factory workers moved away, and population loss accelerated. Between 1960 and 1980, Detroit lost

¹²⁵ Mallach, Alan. *Facing the Urban Challenge*. 7.

¹²⁶ Long, Heather. "Reality Check: U.S. Manufacturing Jobs at 1940s Levels." *CNN Business*. April 7, 2017. <http://money.cnn.com/2017/04/07/news/economy/us-manufacturing-jobs/index.html>.

nearly half a million people from the city proper, while Cleveland, Philadelphia, PA, and St. Louis, MO, each lost roughly 300,000.¹²⁷ On the one hand, this led to the creation of suburban centers with office space, services, and housing supporting more or less economically segregated populations with reliance on cars rather than public transportation.¹²⁸ On the other hand, metropolitan areas like Las Vegas, NV, Stockton, CA, and Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL, increased population due to immigrant workforces drawn by new housing construction throughout the 1970–1990s. Heavily immigrant supported construction contractors created housing in ever sprawling cities that faced high foreclosure rates following the housing market crash. A third group of metros remained economically stable over time. Cities like Houston, TX, with economies centered on oil and gas production, and cities like Raleigh, NC, Madison, WI, and Austin, TX, with strong bases of government administrations and university employment, faced economic downturn like the rest of the country, but employment in government, administrative, university, and energy sector jobs, and their associated services and consumer bases, had resisted certain forms of geographic sprawl, loss of tax bases, or decreasing real-estate values.¹²⁹

While manufacturing tended to disperse toward the fringes of metropolitan regions, certain industries clustered. Clusters are defined as “geographically concentrated groups of interconnected firms and supporting institutions (e.g.,

¹²⁷ Mallach, Alan. *Facing the Urban Challenge*. 7.

¹²⁸ Puentes, Robert, and Peter McFerrin. *The Intersection of Place and the Economy*. 7.

¹²⁹ Puentes, Robert, and Peter McFerrin. *The Intersection of Place and the Economy*. 7.

universities and colleges) within a general industry sector, [which] are characterized by labor market pooling, supplier specialization, and knowledge spillovers facilitated by high interactivity among firms.”¹³⁰ For example, service industry clusters with a regional customer bases such as banking, insurance, legal services, and engineering, tended to remain clustered in urban cores like Cleveland, OH, or fringe cities like Alexandria, VA, with close proximity to major urban centers. Universities with large, historic campuses that are exempt from property taxes often extended their control of surrounding properties (e.g., houses, light industry, and other building infrastructures). Intellectual property, software, and biotech firms clustered in their own campuses and office parks in areas like Silicon Valley in California or Research Triangle Park in North Carolina. The tendency toward clustering financial services, educational institutions, and technological industries amidst sprawling manufacturing increased a different kind of informational, commercial, and social landscape. This new landscape is organized in office parks, campuses, and industrial parks sharing labor, investment capital, and commercial activities. They also tend to be aware of professional network needs, and rely on non-profit or membership agencies like Center for Entrepreneurial Development at RTP to support economic and industry partnerships among associated firms.¹³¹

The geographical distribution of labor and industry matters for policy makers because it shapes the social, economic, and material basis for revitalization. For example, those factories closest to the urban core were less efficient because of

¹³⁰ Puentes, Robert, and Peter McFerrin. *The Intersection of Place and the Economy*. 19.

¹³¹ Puentes, Robert, and Peter McFerrin. *The Intersection of Place and the Economy*. 12.

their more limited access to distribution routes, capacity for production to meet demand technology, and aging infrastructures, and were the first to begin closing in the 1960's. This hit low-income, urban, black populations the hardest; they struggled to relocate to suburbs because of decreased finances, discriminatory housing policies, and disproportionately lower access to automobiles and public transportation networks.¹³² At the same time, the growth of the financial industry, corporations, and service labor within urban cores limited opportunities for blue-collar workers and forced less-skilled laborers into low-wage commercial industries.

Following the financial crisis, the economic design challenge faced by policy experts was how to amplify production among a fixed set of assets. Clustered knowledge-based and service economies, like universities, advanced industry, and medical services, were seen as having greater economic potential in a restricted economy. However, these industries struggled to train and attract advanced workforces, especially in mid-size and post industrial cities with long histories of blue-collar labor. At the same time, larger markets were becoming increasingly unaffordable, and the conversion of industrial wasteland, neighborhoods, downtowns, and other aging and waning infrastructures proved attractive to these highly-educated professionals. The revitalization of urban spaces with public amenities, lifestyle infrastructures like parks and greenways, and newly refurbished office spaces built from old industrial factories offered a new and exciting

¹³² Puentes, Robert, and Peter McFerrin. *The Intersection of Place and the Economy*. 12.

environment for young professionals alongside aging baby boomers wishing to downsize. A robust branding of place-based social values and affordable living was on trend, and helped stimulate a concentration of capital, jobs, and cultural assets directed at these existing industry clusters.

Those places with more economically stable bases due to government or universities with untaxed land-holdings become beneficiaries of place-based policies. For example, existing industry clusters like the Research Triangle Park (RTP), founded in 1959, is accessible to Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, all relatively stable economic, research, university, and legislative centers. Manufacturing decline in Durham left divested and devalued industrial properties, like the American Tobacco Campus, which presented opportunities for cultural and commercial investment, especially after the housing market crash. The revitalization of post-industrial cities like Durham in connection with tech-industry clusters became one answer to the challenge of integrating existing knowledge-based innovation clusters dispersed within a sprawling regional context. “Urbanization invigorated these areas by making them appealing to knowledge workers whose demand for urban amenities could not have been met in these regions in previous decades.”¹³³

Quality of place “enhance the other [economic] drivers by exhibiting the density, diversity, and distinctness” of a place.¹³⁴ These quality of place enhancements aimed to reinvigorate downtowns, convert industrial sites, and

¹³³ Puentes, Robert, and Peter McFerrin. *The Intersection of Place and the Economy*. 20.

¹³⁴ Metropolitan Policy Program. *Blueprint for American Prosperity*. 6.

stimulate “smart growth,” a strategy of targeted land-use investments to stimulate economic value in urban cores.¹³⁵ Tax-subsidies including historic tax credits, land use and district overlays like business improvement districts (BID), placemaking, and tactical urbanism promoted by economic development agencies, municipal planning departments and chambers of commerce all helped steer metropolitan economies toward higher-asset sector clustering. Policy experts encouraged developers, along with municipal and state legislators, to view “vacant and underutilized urban properties”¹³⁶ (e.g., abandoned industry sites, industrial waterfronts, and historic architecture) as a “unique set of characteristics and resources that, if fully leveraged, could be converted into vital competitive assets.”¹³⁷ The Cuyahoga River that runs through Cleveland, for example, was infamous for industrial fires in the 1950’s, but after being cleaned up is now the setting for the city’s aquarium, outdoor music venues, and boat tours.¹³⁸ “How these cities acknowledge the reality of being a smaller city, reconfigure their physical environment, reuse surplus land and buildings, and target their resources to capitalize on their assets will likely determine whether they will continue to decline, or will achieve vitality as smaller but stronger cities.”¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Smart Growth America. “Our Vision.” Last accessed May 1, 2019. smartgrowthamerica.org/our-vision/what-is-smart-growth/.

¹³⁶ Vey, Jennifer. *Restoring Prosperity Report: The State Role in Revitalizing America’s Older Industrial Cities*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2007. 8.

¹³⁷ Vey, Jennifer. *Restoring Prosperity Report*.

¹³⁸ Ohio History Central. “Cuyahoga River Fire” Last accessed May 1, 2019. http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Cuyahoga_River_Fire.

¹³⁹ Mallach, Alan. *Facing the Urban Challenge*, 3.

In addition to urban revitalization efforts that sought to transform the quality of place, more incremental tax policies aimed to encourage industry research, curb housing sprawl, and advantage industry and wealth concentrated in urban spaces. Brookings' Metro policy proposals included caps or elimination of mortgage interest deductions,¹⁴⁰ extension of R&D tax credits,¹⁴¹ and even the creation of a national infrastructure bank.¹⁴² Eliminating the mortgage interest deduction aimed to reduce suburban sprawl and overconsumption of housing property and second mortgages, incentivize downsizing, while claiming to decrease government deficit by \$166 billion over five years. R&D tax credits aimed to promote research by private companies and increase investments in clustered research parks. H-1B Visas for specialty occupations including scientists, engineers, and technological experts, aimed to import international talent.¹⁴³ Other proposals sought to commercialize university research through equity ownership that would commodify graduate research and spur venture capital and commercial investment in university departments.

¹⁴⁰ Downs, Anthony. *What's Wrong with American Housing?* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, December 28, 2011.
https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/1228_housing_downs.pdf.

¹⁴¹ Lee, Jessica, and Mark Muro. "Cut to Invest: Make the Research & Experimentation Tax Credit Permanent." *Remaking Federalism, Renewing the Economy*, November 2012.

¹⁴² Puentes, Robert. "What Would an Infrastructure Bank Really Do?" *Brookings: Up Front*. July 16, 2012.

¹⁴³ Bailey, Martin, Bruce Katz, and Darrell West. "Building a Long-Term Strategy for Growth Through Innovation." *Growth Through Innovation*, May 2011.

Proposals to streamline patent approvals aimed to further advance knowledge economies around university settings.¹⁴⁴

Together, these recommendations for taxes, land use, and research incentives relate a theory of change where concentrating technological innovation, businesses, and amenities in urban placeforms helps rebuild an economy in crisis. At the same time, these policy recommendations support the further privatization of wealth and the transformation of devalued property into amenities most accessible to highly educated and skilled workers and middle and upper class consumers.

The strategy of innovation clusters is intricately connected with creative placemaking and the building of more dense urban environments. New Urbanist and urban planner Jeff Speck promotes the importance of “walkability” in redesigning street grids to counteract car culture and advance economic resilience and environmental health in urban centers. He points to Portland that early on created urban growth barriers that resisted sprawl while investing in bicycle transit that encouraged pedestrian mobility. Now, Portland is experiencing a 50% increase in college millennials moving to the city between 2000-2010. Speck argues this is made possible by increasing density and concentration at the city core. “So on the one hand a city saves money for its residents by being more walkable and bikeable, but on the other hand, it is also the cool kind of city that people want to be in these days.” This perception of Portland is not doubt aided by shows like *Portlandia* that

¹⁴⁴ Bailey, Martin, Bruce Katz, and Darrell West. “Building a Long-Term Strategy for Growth Through Innovation.” *Growth Through Innovation*, May 2011.

depicted its progressive, creative lifestyle as the place “where young people go to retire.”¹⁴⁵

Even sprawling desert cities like Phoenix, whose downtown features wide intersections, broad streets, and no street-tree foliage providing shade want to reimagine themselves as dense urban neighborhoods. One Phoenix blogger encourages the city to invest in *Live Work Play: The New Urban Model*. “When urban areas were at their best, they were thriving, vibrant places where people had everything they needed for a happy life in one convenient neighborhood or area. The idea of stepping out of your apartment in the morning, walking next door for a cup of coffee and seeing your neighbors doing the same, then walking, biking, taking public transit or driving to your job close by is once again an appealing lifestyle.”¹⁴⁶

Promoting his 2013 book “The Metropolitan Revolution” Bruce Katz captures the relation of creative placemaking, urban density, and innovation clusters in his promotional youtube video, *The New Geography of Innovation*,

“Today proximity is everything. Workers want to be in urban places that are walkable, bikeable, hyper caffeinated, where they can bump into other workers and share ideas. Firms also want to be close to other firms, research labs, and universities and collaborative spaces so that smart ideas can be turned into smart products for the market. Innovation districts are this century's productive geography. They are both competitive places and cool spaces, and they will transform your city and metropolis.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Portlandia. “Dream of the Nineties.” IFC Video, 3:25. December 1, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4hShMEk1Ew>.

¹⁴⁶ The Urban Phoenix. “Live Work Play: The New Urban Model.” Last accessed May 1, 2019. <https://theurbanphoenix.com/2017/02/11/liveworkplay/>

¹⁴⁷ Metropolitan Revolution. “New Geography of Innovation.” Brookings Institute, 0:48. December 16, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6peAaD_avo.

Unfortunately, this vision for a renewed urban life that is driving educated talent to walkable, amenity rich, and consumptive urban spaces does not also include a vision for reviving declining manufacturing and industry that has left aging populations underskilled for today's labor needs. Nor is it addressing existing low income communities facing development pressure from restored urban spaces and increasingly wealthy residents. The need for community development to sustain low income communities drastically affected by the financial and housing market crisis, are not part of the innovation discourse. Instead the concerns of low income communities are siloed within a separate policy discourse concerned with housing, poverty prevention, and social safety net services. I explore this in the following section.

Concentrated Poverty

A typical story of American urbanism following World War II chronicles a newly mobile populace enthralled with the promise of home ownership, car culture, and safe neighborhoods migrating into suburbs from inner-cities that are stressed by overcrowding and chronic poverty. Inner-cities, however, is not an innocuous synonym for urban cores, but denotes ethnic and racially concentrated neighborhoods and their associated conditions of poverty. It is a term that operates in relation to “slums,” another ill-defined term for dense populations of urban poor living in unmaintained or actively degraded housing in areas experiencing high crime, drug addiction, and other social epidemics. Descriptions of “inner-cities” and “slums” racialize the discourse on poverty and equates people with the conditions of

the places they live. This means that characteristics including violent crime, drug use, chronic joblessness, less educated and low skill-level workers, are attached to both individuals and the places they live. A more critical retelling of the story of American urbanism might be that to help sustain white cultural hegemony and industrial wealth following World War II, government home loans and discriminatory housing policies, enhanced by increased mobility, enabled white, middle-class segregation in the suburbs.

In his address to the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Senator Obama argued that anti-poverty policy is too often coupled with the idea of inner-cities and urban policy. Instead, he argued that structural explanations and alignment between municipalities and the federal government are necessary, “We need to stop seeing cities as the problem and start seeing them as the solution.”¹⁴⁸ The discourse of inner cities too often blames the conditions of underfunded, low income housing projects on the people who live within them, rather than hold accountable the legislation and law-makers that divert and divest economic resources.

The metro-policy narrative is a little more politically and economically complicated. It counters older urbanist narratives regarding ‘inner-cities’ with a picture of interconnected industries, neighborhoods, county and municipal services. The metro-policy narrative moves away from a striated view of impoverished inner cities surrounded by wealthy suburbs and towards a more structural economic geography, equally challenged but more dynamic and interconnected. Still,

¹⁴⁸ Barack Obama, “Speech to the U.S. Conference of Mayors,” *C-Span* video, 12:24. June 21, 2008, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?206123-2/obama-speech-mayors>.

problematically it resolves with the idea that an innovation economy built on American's newfound love of cities as livable, walkable, local-centric, and diverse places to live, work, and play is going to advance all American toward prosperity in the 21st century.

Traditional urban narratives are not comprehensive or structurally complex. Traditional urbanist narratives don't express the complex continuity of forces that has structured disparity in America. They tend to make white flight sound like a temporary lack of cultural judgement and the present moment of urban revitalization a marvelous return to Main Street values. These traditional narratives never express how 50 years of ongoing industry sprawl, decline of manufacturing jobs, or consolidation of corporations has not only lead to the abandonment urban cores but the abandoned American workers who have little opportunity to transition into higher skilled labor, which itself is threatened by automation. While racist housing policies and social biases are often evoked in the tale of white flight, it is rarely addressed how income segregation and wealth disparity was locked into the geographic divisions of our metropolitan regions and perpetuated through excessive construction of new housing (e.g., McMansions and suburban sprawl) coupled with the eradication of low-income housing and devaluation of urban neighborhoods. And while there exists a common awareness that urban revitalization is fueled by gentrification and displacement the interdependent relationship between urban revitalization, decreasing affordability even to middle classes, and the

suburbanization of poverty is only just becoming apparent.¹⁴⁹ The traditional narrative also does not questions notions of home ownership, which throughout the 1990s and 2000s was widely promoted by Presidents and federal administrations to support diversity in the housing market and encourage moderate income populations to leave cities to seek own homes in the suburbs.¹⁵⁰ This expansion set the conditions for predatory subprime mortgages in which more than 50% of all the mortgages made to black families and 40% of mortgages made to Latinx families were subprime, compared with only 22% among white borrowers.¹⁵¹

In this section I consider policy concerning the growing concentration of poverty in metropolitan regions and examine the socio-economic conditions and drivers that perpetuate it. Then I examine how the perception of a “double burden” associated with poor people living in low income communities underlies a history of affordable housing policy and serves to displace communities and privatize public housing resources. Following from this history, I look at the federal Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative to see how a unified strategy designed by the White House Office of Urban Affairs combined social and community resources to create a more equitable and empowered community-based process for affordable housing development. In this context, I return to post-Katrina New Orleans and the

¹⁴⁹ Watson, Tara. “New Housing, Income Inequality, and Distressed Metropolitan Areas.” *Brookings Institution, Metro Economy Series*, September 2007.

¹⁵⁰ Bush, George, W. “President Calls for Expanding Opportunities to Home Ownership.” Office of the Press Secretary. June 17, 2002.
<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020617-2.html>.

¹⁵¹ Mallach, Alan. “Tackling the Mortgage Crisis: 10 Action Steps for State Government.” *Brookings*, May 2008. 6.

redevelopment of Harmony Oaks. I consider how public private partnerships created important value and resources for communities, supported healthier living accommodations, but also eliminated necessary affordable units, disempowered an already fragile community and further displaced residents.

Concentrated poverty is defined generally as the occurrence of “poor people living in very poor places.”¹⁵² Specifically, concentrated poverty is a rate capturing the proportion of all individuals living below the poverty line in a certain area (metropolitan, region, county) who live in high-poverty neighborhoods, which are defined according to a census tract where 40% of residents live in families with incomes that are at or below the federal poverty line. Research over the last 40 years shows an increase in the concentration of poverty. From 1970-1990 the number of poor people living in high poverty neighborhoods in U.S. metropolitan areas nearly doubled from 1.9 million to 3.7 million.¹⁵³

People tend not to settle in mixed-income communities, but it is not only bias that leads to segregated settlement patterns. Policy experts attribute many structural conditions to increasing income inequality coupled with increasing geographic concentrations of income segregated households. These include discriminatory housing policies that tended to separate communities by race and income: “white flight” in the 1950s and 1960s (i.e., the movement of white households from city cores to suburbs and exurbs); regional deindustrialization and periods of economic

¹⁵² Federal Reserve System and Brookings Institution. *The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America: Case Studies from Communities Across the U.S.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2008. 7.

¹⁵³ Federal Reserve System and Brookings Institution. 14.

stagnation that had a disproportionate economic effect on populations and areas of unskilled labor that remained clustered; increasing integration of white and black middle-class households in the 1980-90s that shifted formerly racially segregated households into income segregated neighborhoods; and market-driven demand for new construction of high-income neighborhoods. All of these factors as well as the stigma of poverty and class difference created trends of wealth disparity, income inequality, and increasing geographic segregation.

Concentrated poverty, however, is more than just the condition of geographic and income segregation. Concentrated poverty in policy discourses denotes a “double burden,” in which people’s opportunity for economic advancement is limited in accordance with the socio-economic conditions of the communities in which they reside. However, the relationship between life outcomes and neighborhood conditions is often problematically reduced to equate people and place. In areas of concentrated poverty we expect to find unsafe neighborhoods, failing schools, substandard housing, inadequate private services, and “diminished community hope.”¹⁵⁴ Combined with deeply embedded structural conditions, concentrated poverty “represents the confluence of these two ideas [place and people] in America.”¹⁵⁵ From these perceptions emerges policy rhetoric to the effect that poor communities should be dispersed into integrated mixed-income communities. Toward this goal, vouchers and the eradication and redevelopment of affordable housing serves to displace communities with the pretense of a benevolent action.

¹⁵⁴ Federal Reserve System and Brookings Institution. 12.

¹⁵⁵ Federal Reserve System and Brookings Institution. 12.

Less often is policy and legislation directed at correcting the underlying economic, infrastructural, and educational conditions that impoverish a place. A paternalistic view has infused affordable housing discourse, and believes that integrating poor people into mixed-income settings will lead to better and more productive social outcomes and behaviors. Voucher programs are created on the promise to advance individuals from their place of need by moving them from their place of residence. Federal housing programs like Hope VI aim to create attractive mixed income neighborhoods that blur the distinction between market rate renters and subsidized low income residents. There is great virtue in Hope VI efforts to destigmatize poverty and extend high quality housing to all residents regardless of need. And there is clear evidence that children have better life outcomes when they grow up in less impoverished environments.¹⁵⁶ However, residencies of this type, often managed by private companies, replace older and larger affordable housing complexes with fewer affordable units in order to make financing work for profit-driven developers selling market rate units and cashing government provided affordable tax credits. Little critical assessment is given to the way in which policies that support deconcentration have deteriorating effects on existing community networks, including the disintegration of community identity, support structures, and previous efforts toward collective empowerment and community accountability. Deconcentration also tends to severely reduce access to housing for those very low income individuals with past criminal records, evictions, and defaults. In fact, the

¹⁵⁶ Ratcliffe, Caroline, "What affects the future success of poor children?" *Urban Institute*, September 8, 2015. <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/what-affects-future-success-poor-children>.

history of affordable housing reform demonstrates increasing support for privatization, reduction of public housing services, and increasing control (i.e., tenet rules and restrictions) in the hands of private property owners.

Federal engagement with urban development began with the Federal Housing Act (FHA) of 1949, which was part of President Truman's "Fair Deal." The FHA financed the clearance of slums, provided homeowners insurance, and built 800,000 more housing units. Later, President Johnson created the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1965, linking housing and urban development into the same federal agency. This linkage set a course for socio-economic policies that connected infrastructure, housing, and poverty.

Based on an argument that building sound housing for the poor was a strategy for urban revitalization goes back to the early years of the 20th century.... It was driven by social theories that held that the physical characteristics of slum housing—a term often applied to any area that was old and not visibly well maintained—were to blame for the crime and social degradation that middle-class observers saw in the cities' poorer quarters, and that these social ills could be cured through construction of physically sound housing.¹⁵⁷

This equivalency between people and the conditions of their places justified the displacement of over 600,000 families—predominantly poor and African-American—during the urban renewal of the 1960s.¹⁵⁸

Susan Bennett, a professor of Law and Director of the Community and Economic Development Law Clinic at American University, argues that public housing policy and legislation has pursued ongoing practices of concentration and

¹⁵⁷ Mallach, Alan. *Facing the Urban Challenge*. 18.

¹⁵⁸ Mallach, Alan. *Facing the Urban Challenge*. 18.

subsequent deconcentration. “By architectural and political design, public housing complexes began their history in racial and geographical isolation, an isolation intensified over the years by demographic shifts, labor and housing market forces, and vicissitudes of federal housing policy.”¹⁵⁹ The growth of welfare policy, Bennett asserts, is coupled with the physical eradication of low-income housing, provided for by federal policies that wished to “deconcentrate” communities by advancing market objectives.¹⁶⁰

Public displays of housing demolition furthered a rhetorical image of endemic poverty and broken communities that defined the American public’s impression of poverty and cities. At the same time, these displays masked government’s failure to properly fund housing complexes and the serious outcomes of displacement of poor communities and the creation of a publicly subsidized, private market for affordable housing. “From the early 1970’s on, media coverage of spectacles such as the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe towers in St. Louis heightened public awareness of the reality of physical decline of some public housing, so that all public housing came to represent the most removed, the most ‘other’ of isolated poor communities, the archetype of the ‘outcast ghetto.’”¹⁶¹ As the public marveled at demolition, there also emerged a negative attitude toward high rise public housing in so called inner-cities

¹⁵⁹ Bennett, Susan. “The Possibility of a Beloved Place: Residents and Placemaking in Public Housing Communities.” *St. Louis University Public Law Review* 19 (2000): 8.

¹⁶⁰ *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* • Volume 5, Number 2 • 2001 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development • Office of Policy Development and Research.

¹⁶¹ Bennett, Susan. 8.

as indicative of conditions of poverty (i.e. crime, drugs, broken family units) that plagued poor people.

While mass media displays of housing demolition waned, popular media of the 90's and 2000's picked up the themes of urban poverty and urban revitalization. Images of black bodies in film and television were often transposed upon places of poverty that are irreparably bad and from which the hero must escape or succumb to the conditions of their place. Alternatively, white bodies achieved a privilege of social and economic freedom through the reclamation of urban space. Films like *Hoop Dreams* depicted the heroic tale of a young black boy who followed his dreams to not only escape poverty but most importantly leave the projects.¹⁶² *The Wire*, offered a detailed and intimate portrait of the drug trade and crack epidemic in Baltimore. But it also allowed communities around the country who'd never been in project housing to experience that environment as an endemic and unchanging condition of Black lives. Conversely, shows like *Friends*, *Seinfeld*, and *Sex in City*, which aired in throughout the 90s, depicted fun-loving and economically mobile white singles living in the city, being sexually promiscuous without consequence, and often living in spacious, reclaimed industrial lofts. They helped reclaim the fantasy of urban living for white middle classes.

At the same time, national policy sought to address the physical decline of public housing. The 1989 National Commission on Distressed Public Housing was charged to develop a plan to eliminate distressed housing units by the year 2000.

¹⁶² Bennett, Susan. 8.

The commission recommended ten years of appropriation for capital improvements of the 86,000 “severely stressed” units nationally. The Commission development a legal classifications to identify what constitutes *severely distressed* using four indicators—families living in distress, crime rate, problems in managing the environment, and physical deterioration.¹⁶³ The commission also recommended incremental policies that would create stability within housing communities by retaining working class families to remain living within the public housing system. However, the Commission’s call for capital appropriations for “severely stressed,” units was later reframed by congressional legislators as a direct call for the eradication of units. Bennett writes, “There was no such recommendation, the only reference to eradication being mentioned in the prefatory cover letters to Congressional committee chairs.”¹⁶⁴ Despite the commission’s intent, Bennett suggests that legislative prerogative and perceptions surrounding the double burden of poverty resulted in action to demolish housing and displace people rather than restore housing and secure communities.

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA) further expanded the definition around ‘severely distressed’ while eliminating rules governing the eradication of housing stock. Since 1981, the eradication of an affordable housing unit required another unit be built somewhere else. After QHWRA, replacement of affordable units was no longer required, and instead the

¹⁶³ Bennett, Susan. 14.

¹⁶⁴ Bennett, Susan. 15.

legislation expanded Section 8 vouchers for private market subsidies with more “landlord-friendly” policy.¹⁶⁵ Definitions for designating housing as distressed and marked for eradication expanded to include housing that had “inappropriately high population density” and “serious deficiencies in the original design,” or the presence of “very low-income families with children, unemployed, and dependent on various forms of public assistance,” or properties determined to be a “contributing factor to the physical decline of and disinvestment by public and private entities in the surrounding neighborhood.”¹⁶⁶ Essentially, the evolution of legal reasoning made the very conditions of poverty and its perceived double burden on people and surrounding places grounds for the elimination of affordable units. With elimination of housing came privatization, and poor communities faced an urban context where cities were becoming more expensive and had increasingly limited housing stock. This housing stock was also controlled by private landlords accepting tax credits backed by private equity and insurance. These landlords also could establish discriminatory tenant rules, which created even more barriers for low-income families and individuals.

The housing market collapse in 2008 greatly accelerated conditions of income inequality for people living below the federal poverty line with particular complexities associated with populations of suburban poor. While the overall number of poor people in metropolitan areas rose, the greatest effects could be seen in suburban

¹⁶⁵ Bourdon, Richard, “Public Housing and Section 8 Reforms: The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act.” *CSR Report for Congress*. Order Code 98-868 E. October 30, 1998. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Bennett, Susan. 11.

metro areas. In 2010, the number of poor living in the largest 100 metro areas grew by 5.5 million from 1999 to 2009, and more than two-thirds of that growth occurred in suburbs. Between 2007 and 2009, the poverty rate increased in 57 of the 100 largest metro areas, and nationally from 13% to 14%. Cities and suburbs gained 1.2 million poor people in 2008-2009, accounting for two-thirds of the national increase in the poor population that year. The national average doesn't represent the extent of devastation to poor communities in certain metropolitan areas. According to the report, the city of Allentown, PA, saw a 10.2% increase in its poverty rate, while the poverty rate in Chattanooga, TN, increased by 8%.¹⁶⁷

The spatialization of poor populations between 2000-2008 trended toward increased suburbanization.¹⁶⁸ In the 2000's, the numbers of poor people living in suburban areas increased by 37.4%, more than doubling the rate of increase seen in cities (16.7%).¹⁶⁹ And while the rate of poverty, that is, the share of people living below the poverty line is 10% higher in urban versus suburban areas, 2009 marked the moment when the total number of poor people living in suburbs exceeded the total number living in cities by 1.6 million nationally.¹⁷⁰

Two concerns arise following the housing market collapse with regard to the concentration of poverty. The first is about how a unified strategy of public and

¹⁶⁷ Kneebone, Elizabeth. *The Great Recession and Poverty in Metropolitan America*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2010. 1.

¹⁶⁸ Watson, Tara. "New Housing, Income Inequality, and Distressed Metropolitan Areas." *Brookings Institution, Metro Economy Series*, September 2007.

¹⁶⁹ Kneebone, Elizabeth. *The Great Recession and Poverty in Metropolitan America*. 1.

¹⁷⁰ Kneebone, Elizabeth. *The Great Recession and Poverty in Metropolitan America*. 5.

private resources advanced an agenda of privatization, increased public subsidy, and reliance on foundations to support social service needs in the housing sector. The second an increasing crisis in the social service sector, particularly in the suburbs, facing sharp increases in joblessness, homelessness and other forms of instability. Yet similarly integrated approaches to housing and human services were not applied. I consider how ongoing discourses about affordable housing and foundation led strategies for community development obscure the continued privatization of America's affordable housing resources and demonstrate an ineffective prioritization of funding by federal agencies and private foundations to address the critical needs facing poor communities.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI)

The Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI) launched by the White House Office of Urban Affairs in 2010, created an interagency partnership among federal neighborhood revitalization efforts of the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC) and the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Education (ED), Justice (DOJ), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Treasury. NRI promised a “place-based approach to help neighborhoods in distress transform themselves into neighborhoods of opportunity.”¹⁷¹ Under this unified strategy, federal agencies combined grants, programming and resources to support low income housing development, and create a more community-centered approach to social service delivery within a housing context. NRI, for example, brought together HHS case

¹⁷¹ Office of Urban Affairs. “Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative.” <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/oua/initiatives/neighborhood-revitalization>.

management structures into relation with HUD established Housing First homeless assistance programs, partnerships with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI), and utilization of new market tax credits. Combined with the Education Department's Head Start approach and school improvement funds, this integration of federal agency programs aimed to create a more holistic approach to affordable housing and high poverty neighborhoods. NRI itself is one of many federal neighborhood revitalization efforts, including longstanding HOPE VI and Choice Neighborhood programs.¹⁷² It is, however, unique in its explicitly multiple-agency approach and focus on the administration's new urban agenda to "catalyze and empower local action while busting silos, prioritizing PPPs, and making existing programs more effective and efficient."¹⁷³ In other words, NRI seeks effectivity and efficiency through the federal funding of private, for profit and not for profit service providers concentrating their client services in specific neighborhoods and affordable housing projects.

The NRI's redevelopment approach is similar in logic to the strategy of metro innovation clusters. They both seek to identify and integrate local assets like education, business, recreation, infrastructure, and community practices by bundling public and private funding, tax-credit resources, private equity, and foundations dollars to support community-based planning.¹⁷⁴ Guidelines provided by the NRI

¹⁷² Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. *Building Neighborhoods of Opportunity: White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative Report*. Washington, DC: White House, July 2011. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/nri_pb_agencies_final_9.pdf.

¹⁷³ Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative.

¹⁷⁴ Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative.

help frame the values of community participation in the neighborhood planning process. Residents are encouraged to organize through their own leadership bodies with the support of neighborhood associations and community agencies. Local or embedded non-profit organizations are tasked with cultivating community engagement throughout planning process in an effort to bring community leadership to the table with contractors, architects, and funding partners. Emphasis on measurable accountability throughout the process attended to resident health and community safety. This community engaged process was considered a new, more holistic, and intentional approach to community and housing development. Harmony Oaks, the mixed-income affordable housing development that replaced C.J Peete following Hurricane Katrina, was to become a national case for a progressive new era of community based, housing redevelopment.

Harmony Oaks: A Case Study in Unified Strategy

The former C.J. Peete, known locally as Magnolia Projects, was built in 1941 with 1,403 affordable units. Magnolia Projects was a thriving place of African American culture in New Orleans, including the birthplace of sculptor Willie Birch and a thriving scene for New Orleans Bounce music. Of note was the nearby Flint Goodrich Hospital, a Black owned hospital, operated by an HBCU, serving Black patients and training Black physicians for almost a century (1896-1983). High crime rates throughout the 1990's and 2000's led to C.J. Peete's decline.¹⁷⁵ The rebuilding of this housing complex was seen as a national test case for the collaborative work

¹⁷⁵ "Magnolia Projects." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnolia_Projects.

of national philanthropy and the federal agencies to turn the page on community, housing redevelopment with powerful outcomes serving a local community in need. According to a report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, one of the national philanthropies invested in the redevelopment project,

Transforming C.J. Peete and the area around it into a vibrant mixed-income community called Harmony Oaks, while also helping residents acquire new skills, leadership opportunities and services, could achieve important results for the residents and provide coherence to philanthropic activities...in ways that are results-oriented, resident-focused, multigenerational and economically sustainable.¹⁷⁶

C.J. Peete did not, in fact, sustain significant damage after Katrina in 2005. At the time housing advocates encouraged the housing authority to utilize federal funding to rehabilitate the complex. The massive evacuation, however, of an estimated 1,040,000 residents from New Orleans prior to the storm left the housing development, already below half its original capacity. By the time rehabilitation versus demolition was being fought in courts, only 100 families remained.¹⁷⁷ As discussed earlier, HANO was determined that while residents were gone, rather than refurbish existing and distressed units that the property would be demolished and rebuilt. This fact did not go unnoticed by residents spread across the region. In its place would be constructed a mixed-income, New Urbanist housing complex: Harmony Oaks. This new complex would contain 460 rental units—half the original

¹⁷⁶ Fiester, Leila. *Investing in New Orleans: Lessons for Philanthropy in Public Housing Redevelopment*. Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013.
<https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-InvestinginNewOrleans-2014.pdf>.

¹⁷⁷ Fiester, Leila. 11.

number—with only 193 units designated for public housing, 144 reserved for tenants qualifying for low-income housing tax credits, and 123 market-rate rental units.¹⁷⁸

The NRI brought together a partnership of federal agencies, private developers, non-profit agencies, CDC's, national foundations, and J.P. Morgan Bank. The assembly of partners also included McCormack Baron Salazar (MBS), a private housing construction and management company; the New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative; KAI Design, a New Urbanist architecture firm; and Urban Strategies, a non-profit community design firm. The total project cost \$173 million and “braided” together \$16 million of HOPE VI grant funds from HUD, \$27 million in community block grants from the Louisiana Office of Community Development, \$66.9 million from the Public Housing Authority of New Orleans, \$56.3 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Equity (provided by Goldman Sachs in a last minute deal after AIG had to be bailed out in 2008), \$1.97 million in bond funds, and \$4.3 million from private foundations.¹⁷⁹

The partnership of MSB and Urban Strategies speaks to the intertwining relationship of private management and non-profit social service as a facet of a unified community redevelopment strategy and use of PPP structures. MSB is an integrated construction and management firm specializing in the mixed income, affordable housing redevelopment market. Their team includes in-house architects, financial planners, construction, and project managers. They also manage the

¹⁷⁸ Reckdahl, Katy. “Excerpt: The Long Road from C.J. Peete to Harmony Oaks.” *Shelterforce: The Voice of Community Development*. October 14, 2013.
https://shelterforce.org/2013/10/14/the_long_road_from_c-j-_peete_to_harmony_oaks/.

¹⁷⁹ Reckdahl, Katy.

property, thereby controlling cost estimates, tenant rules, property development, and rent collection.¹⁸⁰

Urban Strategies is a non-profit community development firm. They oversee tenant engagement in the planning process, operated a social service case management structure for residents, and provided measurement and feedback to stakeholders. From 2008-2009, they made more than 600 resident referrals to 49 local partner organizations providing mental health, literacy, technology training, seniors and youth services.¹⁸¹ Urban Strategies was also charged with locating former residents displaced by Katrina, implementing a workforce and construction training program, and maintaining ongoing community engagement. They continue to have involvement as a service provider and case manager in the community.

According the Annie E Casey Foundation, their investment served as evidence of philanthropy's value as an engaged partner helping build efficiency and accountability in the PPP structure. According to their report, in-kind and direct resources devoted to Harmony Oaks families totaled more than \$40 million.¹⁸² Casey points to their role in designing a holistic community planning approach that brought construction and property management into conversation with residents and serviced resident needs with social service and job programs supported by financial and non-profit partners.

¹⁸⁰ Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. 18.

¹⁸¹ Fiester, Leila. 14.

¹⁸² Fiester, Leila. 18.

The language used in Urban Strategies report to NRI shows how the application of applied models supersedes intentional community development and engagement. Urban Strategies tells the federal program administrators that “place-based case management” ensured that “human capital building activities were (a) closely coordinated with physical revitalization goals, activities and timeline, and (b) designed to leverage existing resources, avoid duplication of services and contain costs.”¹⁸³ Recognizing the technocratic context of the report, this language still dehumanizes what otherwise appears in other reports about Urban Strategies to describe a personal and considered approach to addressing community needs. Nevertheless this kind of language belies the problem of organized capital and resources brought by non-profit agencies, foundation and government organizations to serve human needs. It makes clear that Urban Strategies is applying a rigid model of industrialized service delivery, producing measurable resident outcomes to fit a predetermined record of achievement designed by other partners (e.g. construction timelines, resident involvement planning processes, controlled service costs, and in particular to Harmony Oaks, identifying and seeking return for displaced residents). The language of applied models makes it clear that Urban Strategies is not *in* community with the residents of CJ Peete but instead serves its funders. This is not, ultimately, a case against Urban Strategies, but an identification of the fact that organized capital and non-profit agencies do not in their essential makeup hold accountability and trust with communities. And in the context of a very traumatized

¹⁸³ Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative.

community being asked to help redevelop their own neighborhood, it is this lack of accountability that had been at the center of resident's fears from the start.

Katy Reckdahl, a writer for *Shelterforce*, a community development field journal, tells a harrowing and emotional tale about Harmony Oaks. This story is not found in Urban Strategies report. However, Reckdahl's report is corroborated by reports created by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and evidenced by statements in the Congressional Record. The Harmony Oak project was mired in deeply justified resident distrust and a complex set of negotiations held between MBS and residents involving control of community space, housing design, and selection of the neighborhood's name, among other contentious issues. In most cases MBS refused resident recommendations and was unwilling to let residents control their own community space as had been the tradition.¹⁸⁴ In many cases, Urban Strategies stood between partners and the resident community, ensuring stakeholder investment while mitigating community concerns. Tenant control policies created by MBS and supported under provisions of the QHWRA, such as denying tenants with criminal records or giving preference to tenants holding jobs, became obstacles for Urban Strategies to negotiate. In response, Urban Strategies immediately trained and hired residents to serve as case managers, expunging court records for returning residents facing strict new tenant rules. When HANO refused to provide relocation funding to support returning residents evacuated from affordable housing before Hurricane Katrina, Urban Strategies had to build a legal case for the housing

¹⁸⁴ Reckdahl, Katy.

authority to cover relocation expenses. They ultimately appealed to HUD's Director and insisted on relocation funds under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act, which provides for compensation and assistance in the case of government's compulsorily property acquisition. Despite the rhetoric of service oriented, community-centered housing redevelopment, in practice, Urban Strategies spent its resources either defending the rights of residents, overcoming restrictive management decisions, or serving as a mediator between resident and the private management company, rather than focusing on modeling effective service deployment.¹⁸⁵

The enormity of creating new housing development following a catastrophic storm and housing market collapse should also not be understated. A unified community development strategy is not an entirely ineffective or wrong idea. Nor should it be understated the unique role that private philanthropy played in creating flexible and inventive funding mechanisms that served community needs well beyond physical construction.¹⁸⁶ It is because of Program Related Investments (PRI) by private philanthropy in the form of forgivable loans and flexible grants that Urban Strategies was even able to make efforts to locate displaced residents, expunge records, and offer a right of return.

However, the holistic, community-centered process obscures the larger implications of creating Harmony Oaks, which include the loss of almost 1136

¹⁸⁵ Reckdahl, Katy.

¹⁸⁶ Fiester, Leila. 14.

affordable housing units, displacement of 85% of C. J. Peete residents (only 15% of former residents returned to live at Harmony Oaks), and the privatization of affordable housing using approximately 97.5% government funds to replace HANOs previously existing (and mostly undamaged) public housing projects. More concerning may be that projects like Harmony Oaks, demonstrate a continued deconcentration of urban poor communities rather than addressing the increasing needs of suburban populations, where a lack of planning and need for holistic community approaches were exceedingly urgent.

Conclusions

The logic of concentration and deconcentration in place-based policies created integrated models for addressing social and economic conditions. Patterns of concentration, either of wealth or poverty, technological innovation or low-income housing are deeply imbricated and geographically organized at the moment the housing market and financial markets collapse. A unified strategy, proposed by a hopeful administration, brought together federal agencies and private partners in an unprecedented way. Together, skills, resources and capital were leveraged to address interdependent conditions facing communities. This seemed like the right approach. In some sectors, particularly knowledge-based industries, a unified strategy with strong PPPs created efficiencies and concentrated valuable resources.

However, the idea that a simple shift in thinking from city-state to metropolitan region would unlock assets inherent in the metropolitan geography, ignored the structural conditions created by urban divestment, housing deconcentration, new

construction, stigma and racial bias. All together, these conditions created widening gaps in income inequality and racial segregation and organized them in metropolitan place forms. When the market collapsed, certain industries like education, medicine, and technology were poised to become economic drivers. Housing redevelopment and poverty became a new space for privatization.

A unified strategy to reclaim American cities and deconcentrate poverty is a tactic of urbanization in the way David Harvey speaks of all great American urbanization projects. It reinvests surplus federal funds into infrastructure that subsidizes private investment, manages risk, and transfers public property to the market. Non-profit agencies direct attention to the needs of people and communities, however they also serve as an instrument to leverage foundation funding in a much larger privatization scheme. Foundations use projects like Harmony Oaks to fulfill their charitable missions and innovate models for the field. It builds their social capital. But behind the funding, technical services, and strategy modeling, even larger endowments remain tax free and outside public service.

While a new model of place-based, community development was being tested on a housing community, social service networks supporting suburban poor were facing incredible challenges. The market collapse had specific consequences on suburban service providers who could have benefited from a unified strategy and a metro-policy approach. During the first two years of recession, demand for safety-net services by suburban providers increased. Over \$230 billion in federal cash assistance programs expanded under TARP and ARRA was spent in 2009 with over

half of the EITC (earned income tax credit) filed by individuals to subsidize affordable housing rent occurring in suburban communities. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and Unemployment Insurance also rose at a faster rate in suburban metropolitan areas.¹⁸⁷

Suburban agencies faced system challenges related to access, management, and deployment of resources that made it “difficult to coordinate programs and services, potentially creating programmatic redundancies and inefficiencies.”¹⁸⁸ In urban areas, the number of non-profit organizations, faith groups, and government service centers serving the poor were in greater number, more densely located, accessible through public transportation, and possessed more established funding relationships in both the public and private sectors. Suburban agencies, however, had larger service areas, a lack of public transportation serving clients, and more limited capacity to address shifts in client needs including, substance abuse; mental health; employment assistance; food assistance; housing; human services; children and youth services; family services; personal social services; emergency assistance; ethnic and immigrant centers; and homeless care. The rapid growth in demand following foreclosures and job loss brought on by the housing crisis resulted in increased crisis care responses.¹⁸⁹ Agencies reported needing to refer a greater number of clients to other agencies, prioritize clients by degree of need, expand

¹⁸⁷ Allard, Scott, and Benjamin Roth. *Strained Suburbs: The Social Service Challenges of Rising Suburban Poverty*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, October 2010. 1.

¹⁸⁸ Allard, Scott, and Benjamin Roth. 7-8.

¹⁸⁹ Allard, Scott, and Benjamin Roth. 4.

waitlists for services while also narrowing those services, and make significant reductions in staff, salaries, hours of operation, and number of clients served. In some cases agencies had to combine with other organizations or close down.¹⁹⁰ Agencies worked with less funds from state, municipal, and private sources due to a decreased tax base and declining endowments, yet also encountered surges in national stimulus funding, which created operational instabilities.¹⁹¹ All together, the disruption to the social safety net serving an increasingly stressed urban population did not at the same time benefit from the innovative strategies and economic development resources applied to urban revitalization.

Neither tech hubs nor mixed-income housing solve the fundamental issues of poverty or the immediate crisis of foreclosure. Under resourced and at-risk communities could have benefited from a unified strategy and PPP alignments focused on securing the safety net rather than a specific housing redevelopment. What Urban Strategies sought to do in single housing complex could have been designed for a metropolitan scale, integrating a network of PPPs focused on health, education, housing, job training, and industry clusters.

If metro policy proposes a new geography for American prosperity, and readily takes public subsidies and tax credits to fund it, then legislators, policy experts, and foundations should recognize and also address corresponding and interdependent places of distress. Where revitalization creates growth in industry and commercial resources, there should also be growth in social service delivery

¹⁹⁰ Allard, Scott, and Benjamin Roth. 13.

¹⁹¹ Allard, Scott, and Benjamin Roth. 13.

networks as part of a comprehensive and equitable metro-policy. It is necessary to get beyond the idea as expressed by Durham's mayor that economic development opportunities are isolated, singular, and measurable investments whereas issues of poverty are intractable whose solutions offer no associated economic benefit.¹⁹²

The following chapter continues this consideration of placeform and the unified strategy, examining the development of metrics and indicators that determine and measure qualities of place and overall community health. Here, I argues that metrics proposing livability, vitality, and vibrancy are created by federal agencies and private philanthropies to align and measure their work, goals, and objectives. I take back up the issues of placemaking as a joint urban and cultural project and look critically at the challenge to introduce metrics that measure social change at a metropolitan scale while providing evidence of the value of community's inherent strengths. In chapter four I address a case study applying a unified strategy for transportation planning and development. In particular I consider the Greenline, a \$1 billion light rail extension serving the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan regions, and how a transit line connecting the two cities also functions as a regional corridor encouraging tech, commercial, educational, and financial sector clustering. I explore how foundations, cultural organizations and artists, in concert with municipal planners, apply creative strategies to mitigate construction disruption and review their effectiveness in terms of housing access, commercial growth, and community's internal strength to grow into its transformed urban landscape.

¹⁹² Willets, Sarah. "Mayor Bill Bell Has Overseen a Bull City Renaissance. So Why Has Durham's Poverty Rate Gone Up on His Watch?"

Chapter 4 | Livability as Placeforms

Introduction

Community advocates were angry when regional planners for a proposed \$1 billion light rail line (LRT) between downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul, concluded its Environmental Impact Statement claiming no impacts would be “disproportionately borne by minority or low-income communities.”¹⁹³ The proposed *Green Line* would run along University Avenue, an 11 mile stretch known as the Central Corridor between the Twin Cities. 74,000 minorities reside in the Central Corridor, 41% of the areas total population,¹⁹⁴ as opposed to just 27.2% of the Twin Cities seven county region. The Metropolitan Council reported that 40,879 households, 23.1% of people living in the Central Corridor, were living on incomes less than 80% below the poverty line of \$36,577 annual household income. This compared to just 8.3% and 10.6% of households in the adjacent Hennepin and Ramsey Counties which together contain the Corridor.¹⁹⁵ Given the Corridor’s minority-diverse and

¹⁹³ Metropolitan Council. *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, June 2008. <https://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/Central-Corridor/CCLRT-Document s.aspx?page=11>). 3-138.

¹⁹⁴ Metropolitan Council. *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, June 2008.

¹⁹⁵ Metropolitan Council. *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, June 2008. 3-144.

low-income communities, it is not surprising that Ramsey County Commissioner Janice Rettman asked, “How can the impacts not be disproportionate?”¹⁹⁶

However to picture the Central Corridor as simply a minority, low-income area would miss its unique diversity, especially among immigrant communities that have been settled in the area. Nearly 400,000 foreign born Chinese, Ethiopian, Hmong, Indian, Korean, Laotian, Liberian, Mexican, Somalian, and Vietnamese currently live in the Twin Cities.¹⁹⁷ Generations of immigrant communities created important economic and cultural anchors for their own communities, much of which exists in the Corridor.

At least four generations of Hmong (approximately 28,938 people) are settled in the Central Corridor. Hmong are an indigenous South Asian, highland, ethnic minority from Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand who came to the US fleeing persecution following the Vietnam War.¹⁹⁸ Their community has built an incredible array of cultural institutions, businesses and residential neighborhoods across two miles of University Avenue. The Center for Hmong Arts and Talent is a social justice and community arts center that began as the Pom Siab Hmoob Theater in the 1990s. It was the first Hmong theater company in the world. A mile east, also along University Avenue is the Hmong Cultural Center, which hosts a resource library, museum and

¹⁹⁶ Metropolitan Council. “Public Comments.” In *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2008. <https://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/Central-Corridor/CCLRT-Document s.aspx?page=11>). 154.

¹⁹⁷ Minnesota Compass. “Population Trends.” <https://www.mncompass.org/immigration/population-trends#7-10780-d>.

¹⁹⁸ Minnesota Compass. “Hmong foreign-born population.” Groups at a Glance. <https://www.mncompass.org/immigration/groups-at-a-glance-hmong>.

programs in traditional crafts, music, and adult literacy. Across the street, the Hmong American Partnership provides children and family services, economic, housing, and workforce development. The Hmong Corporation, founded in 1988 and run by a third-generation Hmong American, has its offices on University Avenue, and is one of several Hmong owned and operated media companies producing commercial advertising, internet, radio, and TV broadcast services. As many as 12 Hmong churches are sprinkled throughout the Corridor, and as one might expect, there is a diffusion of South Asian foods, supermarkets and farmers markets serving the Twin Cities.

The Central Corridor is also home to a diversity of African immigrant communities, including over 20,000 Somali living in the Twin Cities.¹⁹⁹ Over 50 African-owned businesses operate in the Corridor.²⁰⁰ The African Economic Development Solutions supports a growing African owned business community, providing micro loans, business development resources, home ownership education, and financial literacy workshops. They also produce cultural heritage events in the Corridor.²⁰¹ The Confederation of Somali Community, provides education, advocacy, and economic development for Minnesota's Somali community. A notable symbol of political strength of the African immigrant community is the recent election of Ilan

¹⁹⁹ Minnesota Compass. "Somali foreign-born population." Groups at a Glance.
<https://www.mncompass.org/immigration/groups-at-a-glance-somali>.

²⁰⁰ Little Africa. "Little Africa News and Events."
<http://littleafricamn.org/theres-a-new-cultural-business-district-in-town-and-its-using-art-to-change-the-economic-landscape-of-the-twin-cities>.

²⁰¹ African Economic Development Solutions (AEDS). "Loan Access."
<http://aeds-mn.org/programsservices>.

Omar, a Somali-American Refugee, to the 5th District of the United States House of Representatives.²⁰² Omar previously held the seat for Minnesota State House of Representative²⁰³ District 60B, representing the Corridor's thriving business district between downtown Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota, just across the Mississippi River. African and South Asian communities are just two examples of generationally supportive cultural and economic communities anchoring the Corridor.

As the Green Line planning process unfolded between 2006-2010, transit planners and public critics argued over a narrow position between the LTR's overarching benefits and temporary construction disruption. Green Line planning anticipated that the LTR would offer improved transportation access to retail and medical facilities, neighborhood cohesion and connectivity, pedestrian activity, and foster development.²⁰⁴ Transit planners also acknowledge that two years of construction would permanently decrease parking, disrupt businesses, and remove bus service from transit-dependent populations. Community advocates responded that the loss of street parking could cripple businesses; property tax increases would lead to higher rents; and decreased bus services would hurt transit dependent and elderly populations. However, within early planning stages argument oscillated within this narrow framework and rarely addressed the broader social and economic implications of the new transit corridor.

²⁰² "Ilhan Omar." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilhan_Omar.

²⁰³ King, Tyler. " MN HD 60B.JPG." Ballotpedia. https://ballotpedia.org/File:MN_HD_60B.JPG.

²⁰⁴ Metropolitan Council. *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, June 2008. 3-55.

The public discussion between economic values and temporary inconvenience enabled planners to deflect responsibility and public resistance. The rhetorical claim that construction disruption would be experienced equally by all members of the Corridor community ignored not only income disparities across the Corridor but also the area's disproportionate percentage of minority communities as compared to the rest of the metropolitan region. The notion that impacts would be "borne by all communities along the Corridor," mistook equality for equity, and lead to official determinations that "expected adverse impacts would not be disproportionate," and that "no special mitigation measures...would be necessary."²⁰⁵ Framed by limited material concerns around construction mitigation, the public conversation between transit planners and community advocates missed a critical opportunity to design ways to use transit development to remedy the disparity in the city's most minority rich community. Moreover, the narrow technocratic discourse and equality-neutral policy position deflected municipal and regional partners from developing strategies to leverage powerful cultural and economic assets in tandem with the \$1 billion transit development.

The Central Corridor communities compose a complex, intergenerational, multiethnic, racial, economic, and cultural ecology that defines Corridor neighborhoods' essential livability. Rettman speaks to the fragility of generations of work when she told the Metropolitan Council, "My voice is raised for those who have made the University and Central Corridor a working person's area for many

²⁰⁵ Metropolitan Council. *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, June 2008. 3-138.

generations and ethnic groups who are afraid they are not the ones this multi-million dollar investment is meant for and who will be the forgotten ones and who will be left behind or forced to move.”²⁰⁶ Pride in the many generations of self-determined change is expressed by Corridor resident Benita Warns when she recalled phases of divestment and reinvestment.

In the mid-1980s, University Avenue was a sea of blight. When majority white people fled the area, Asians and African-Americans had opportunities to open businesses in buildings with affordable rents. They poured their hearts and souls into building these family businesses, and many have become successful and profitable. Now they not only serve residents of the surrounding blocks, but many have become destinations for many east metro customers of all racial and cultural groups. The Asians and African-Americans took that blighted area and turned it into a vibrant business district...We cannot afford to lose viable businesses in the City...What will be left? Will it be empty storefronts, boarded up buildings, or other signs of economic disinvestment?²⁰⁷

In public comments resisting the Metropolitan Council's plan, economic arguments became elaborate depictions of moral consequence. John Slade of the Metropolitan Interfaith Council of Affordable Housing (MICAH), described the rise and fall of land values surrounding LTR stations as “a mountain range of increased value [where] the sun shines brightly on the tops. I see them as peaks of gold in the sun.” Without help low-income neighbors would “go tumbling off the sides” and land in the “dark sunless valley.”²⁰⁸ Marg Rozycki, a citizen, offered planners a simple moral and

²⁰⁶ Metropolitan Council. “Public Comments.” In *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2008. 151.

²⁰⁷ Metropolitan Council. “Public Comments.” In *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2008. 91-92.

²⁰⁸ Metropolitan Council. “Public Comments.” In *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2008. 87.

economic equation, “the common good is best served by giving the most to those who have the least.”²⁰⁹ Mychael Rambo, a professor and actor living in the historically African-American Rondo neighborhood, argued that at risk was the community’s self-determination and willingness to contribute generationally, “to give back and feel like their voices and who they are counts and matter.” Despite claims that the light rail was “building community, connectivity, and accessibility,” he saw instead a community being “torn apart and fractured.”²¹⁰ Commissioner Rettman, admonishes the Council that their plan reeked of “social selection and subtle gentrification rather than a transit decision.”²¹¹

Community advocates raised their concerns powerfully and poetically, and the Twin Cities, along with a consortium of private foundations, responded by forming the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC) to address the problems of disparity in the Corridor and integrate transit planning with community sustainability measures. Through a program of corridor management in association with local businesses, parking solutions and financial assistance was provided. More critically, notions of livability and qualities of place articulated by community advocates were addressed through a combination of community working groups, cultural programs,

²⁰⁹ Metropolitan Council. “Public Comments.” In *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2008. 86.

²¹⁰ Metropolitan Council. “Public Comments.” In *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2008. 352.

²¹¹ Metropolitan Council. “Public Comments.” In *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2008. 154.

measurement, and assessment tools that monitored how the LTR would transform the Corridor's as a place to live and work.

In this chapter I explore the way a concept of livability has emerged as a predominant placeform characterizing the assumed social, cultural, and economic qualities of life that are dependent on place. I consider how the concept of livability is introduced into federal transportation and cultural policy through cross-agency efforts at the federal level, and how it is used to identify and measure economic and community development values. I find that livability is a flawed model for healthy growth that can be ineffective in accounting impactful economic and community development outcomes, and reductive in its privileging access and affordability as holistically measures of community strength. I argue that a more balanced measure of community-economic impact is first necessary in order for creative placemaking and livability frameworks to avoid gentrifying communities. In light of this analysis, I return to the Central Corridor and consider how artists pursuing creative placemaking strategies in coordination with Green Line development helped strengthen existing business and resident communities during construction.

Qualities of Place

Livability is both an expressive and phenomenal idea of how people participate, experience, and create relationships and value in the places they live. Livability is also a socio-economic metric that governments and foundations use to measure and direct outcomes in the urbanization process. It is a guideline and indication of health in a community. Within the framework of a more unified federal

strategy, livability produces the image of a place that is knitted together with its essential conditions for life with accessible cultural, economic, educational, transportation, health and housing resources.

Social theorists across fields have developed a concept of place and place-making that considers how a place's many qualities define the way people live. To make place, shape place, or take place, exerts a force on the social orders of a *Lieux-dits*,²¹² a kind of locality and proximity bound up with vernacular meaning and social practice. But place is not simply a geographic identity or even a set of material conditions, but also the qualities by which people understand and identify themselves as being *of* a place. Communities live within and construct the meaning of their place, though its complexity is never completely visible or fully understood, especially in crucial moments of change and development when what is valued is seemingly on the table. Urban renewal's promise is that by changing the conditions of a place, the government can transform the quality of life. But who owns the streets, who determines the sense of a place, and who gets to develop it and for whom? Like the rhetoric of the American dream, urban renewal is often a politically expedient and persistent myth.

The traditional picture of urban renewal is framed by the ideological battle between Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs. Robert Moses was an urban planner in New York City and infamous power broker that held numerous appointments in public parks and planning, and served on the New York City Planning Commission

²¹² Lefebvre, Henri, and Donald Nicholson-Smith. *The Production of Space*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009. 193.

from 1942-1960.²¹³ Jane Jacobs was a journalist and community activist who lead a fight to save New York City's Greenwich Village against Moses' proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway. Her influence as a neighborhood activist deeply influenced the field of urban studies.

Moses' urban renewal policies paved highways through minority communities and neighborhoods in New York City and modeled similar practices across the country. Countering Moses, Jane Jacobs rallied people with a vision of dense urban neighborhoods where residents, shopkeepers, and strangers alike were seen as part of an essential ecology of diverse social and economic patterns. She led the fight in New York against "de-slumming" which she understood as a form of housing eradication that made way for urban development at the expense of poor and minority communities. For Jacobs, the neighborhood served as the primary unit of the civic commons. It is where social activity, accountability, and urban infrastructure come together at a scale where people shape the identity of a place.²¹⁴

The memory of Moses' destructive urban renewal ideologies still resonate in communities today. References to 1960's urban renewal is a common trope indicating insidious, destructive, and racist urban planning. Urban renewal destroyed established Black communities during the civil rights era by buying and seizing property to create massive highways and arterial roadways. The Metropolitan Council's 2008 environmental justice review offered a narrative aside about the

²¹³ "Robert Moses." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Moses.

²¹⁴ Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House, 1992 (1961).

Corridor's Rondo neighborhood, "the heart of St. Paul's African-American community," as having been "devastated by the construction of I-94."²¹⁵ The plan recognized that, "community members are [still] concerned about maintaining the remaining neighborhood fabric and community cohesion." However, official references of this sort serve to identify Black neighborhoods and gesture to the way they were shaped by discriminatory development projects, but also historicize this process rather than recognize its reverberating social, psychological, and structural effects on the community's ongoing struggle for sovereignty, connectedness, and livability.²¹⁶ References to 1960's urban renewal generally gesture to white flight as a means to tokenize community sentiment without accepting responsibility, showing accountability, or providing reparations in future projects.

There are, however, many other images of place-based renewal that emerge from other fields (e.g., political theory, anthropology, architecture, geography). Lefebvre's socialist praxis centers on the potential of working class citizens to drive urban renewal through critical investment in political organizing. He perceives these labor organizers and activists as culturally productive members of society whose urban redevelopment work is effective for increasing social imagination and play.²¹⁷ Lefebvre's social ethics and organizing ethos grounds a lot of today's grassroots,

²¹⁵ Metropolitan Council. *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, June 2008. 3-141.

²¹⁶ Metropolitan Council. *Central Corridor LRT Project: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study*. Minneapolis: MN, June 2008. 3-141.

²¹⁷ Harvey, David. "The Right to the City." *New Left Review* 53 (September October 2008): 23-40.

cooperative, neighborhood redevelopment and art actions, which seek to make places more sustainable through cultural empowerment.

Marc Auge, an anthropologist, offers a more pessimistic depiction of place in contemporary society. For Auge, place is a symbolic reference that holds together muted forms of desire for authentic, historical, and indigenous experiences. He argues that modern life is strung together by non-places, transportation hubs like airports and highways that foster isolation and voyeuristic pleasure in contemporary life. Auge's critique gives pause to the way official business and cultural designations are branded along the Green Line, such as "Little Mekong," "Little Africa," and "Rondo Arts and Culture Heritage Business District." These district designations used to brand Corridor communities also aim to attract tourists, capture consumers, and help passengers passing through possess a sense of place as they transit through neighborhoods. For people who have always lived in these places, their communities become a Green Line stop on a transit map and objects of a commuters' gaze.²¹⁸

Kenneth Frampton, an architectural historian, trouble's modern architecture's role in making places that are regionally nonspecific and almost prophylactic in terms of human capacity to feel and experience their environments. He describes how environmental controls like commercial lighting, air conditioning, and carefully graded terrains remove authentic relationships between the built and natural

²¹⁸ Walljasper, Jay. "Along the Green Line: A Guide to the Central Corridor's Arts and Culture Hot Spots." *Minn Post*, April 18, 2014. <https://www.minnpost.com/the-line/2014/04/along-green-line-guide-central-Corridor-s-arts-and-culture-hot-spots/>.

environments.²¹⁹ In Frampton's modernist purview, Frank Lloyd Wright's *Falling Water* is an example of a regionally critical and seamlessly architectural style that blends into the environment. He worries contemporary architecture is literally conditioning people to live in unnatural any-places. To his point, many decades of dated midwest commercial buildings line the Corridor, and critics of the Green Line wonder how a sleek, futuristic LTR system could possibly blend into this environment.

Don Mitchell, a political geographer, combines Auge and Frampton by considering how architecture and place constructs a faux sense of civic, small town, community through the facades of retail stamped onto the landscape as so many town-center style malls.²²⁰ These malls have replicated, combined and replaced our community and consumer identities, neighborhood hangouts, public squares and parks with real estate holdings for chain retail. The consumer strip that stretches along University Avenue precedes the kind of development that Mitchell is describing, but as Benita Warns testifies, the battle over the heart and soul of this commercial strip says more about a community's willful independence than its shopping preferences. Her belief is that small business and community economic independence are necessary qualities for a livable community, and it is those values

²¹⁹ Frampton, Kenneth. "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance." In *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, edited by Hal Foster, 17-34. New York: New Press, 1998.

²²⁰ Mitchell, Don. "The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85, no. 1 (1995): 108-33.

that are threatened by the contemporary retail development that Green Line planners seek.

In the following section I examine the development of measurement tools by government agencies and cultural policy makers to create concrete and quantifiable values around concepts of liveability and vibrancy. I first look at transportation development guidelines and then cultural policy efforts to match available metric data with larger indicators of community health. I also consider how creative placemaking's use of indicator systems situates the practice within a cultural planning and economic development framework rather than a community development framework. This distinction illustrates the division within the field of creative placemaking, and foreshadows a shift toward more community development approaches that I discuss in chapter five.

Indicators

The initial legislative framing for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) proposed that the number of jobs created by federally supported programs should correlate with dollars expended. However, the need for more nuanced systems of evaluation evolved with federal agency partnerships. The impetus for coordinating urban policy at the federal level through the White House Office of Urban Affairs followed a belief that urban development outcomes are impacted by many interdependent conditions. These include home ownership, housing affordability, access to jobs, environment and community health.

To better understand the interdependence of social and economic conditions facing neighborhoods, cities, regions, federal and cultural policy makers assembled independent *metrics* into interdependent *indicators*. With increasing precision, the aggregation of different geographic scales and quantitative metrics can measure many socio-economic conditions within a population. Assembled together as indicators they aim to create a comprehensive picture of the challenges and conditions facing a community. Where individual metrics fail to capture the interconnected economic and social conditions, indicators systems that group quantitative metrics help identify correlations among statistical data drawn from multiple sectors.

Researchers seeking to identify areas vulnerable to gentrification typically look at a mix of social characteristics, neighborhood income, and housing market statistics. Generally, an area where the median income is less than 50% of the median income of the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) and rapid changes are occurring in median and family household incomes, home values, rent levels, owner occupancy and vacancy rates, then it is plausible that processes of gentrification are underway. The rate of metric change indicates a community's vulnerability to displacement.²²¹

Quantitative approaches alone cannot capture the variable ways that gentrification manifests in communities. Nor do these metrics demonstrate the ways

²²¹ Goetz, Edward, Brittany Lewis, Anthony Damiano, and Molly Calhoun. *The Diversity of Gentrification: Multiple Forms of Gentrification in Minneapolis and St. Paul*. Minneapolis: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota, 2019. <http://gentrification.umn.edu/>. 9.

community's experience and adapt to gentrification, and the effects of those forces on community behaviors, such as reducing the size of housing, taking roommates, or in some cases in ethnic communities along the Green Line, third generation family members moving back in with family to avoid having to leave the community.²²² In an increasingly data dependent time, policy experts argue that if something is not measured it is not visible.²²³ However, if the indicators are not properly designed they will also fail to make visible those outcomes desired by communities and planners. Foundations' focused on metrics of affordability and access may also miss other indications of a community's weakening strength. The total number of affordable rental and housing units may indicate access for low income communities, however, rapidly increasing populations of higher income earners cause other costs of living increases that create additional burden on low-income communities.

At stake in this discussion of livability is a more holistic measure of community wellbeing. The confusion stems from notions of livability supporting equal access across a population as opposed to equity for a place and its community. Equity, as I define it, is a consideration of a community's variable pathways toward sustainability and growth and their ability to overcome structural insecurities and disparities. Equity should be defined and determined differently in accordance with how communities are situated in the context of their cultural and economic conditions and in

²²² Goetz, Edward, Brittany Lewis, Anthony Damiano, and Molly Calhoun. 6.

²²³ Lambert, Jonathan. "Pregnant Behind Bars: What We Do And Don't Know About Pregnancy And Incarceration." *All Things Considered*, March 21, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/03/21/705587775/pregnant-behind-bars-what-we-do-and-dont-know-about-pregnancy-and-incarceration>.

relationship to dominant forms of power. Based on this framework for equity, access to affordable housing based on the total number of available units in an area and priced in accordance to an area's median income, is not a measurement of equity in affordability. It is simply a metric capturing the number of below market rentals that will accept tax-vouchers as forms of payment. Without a more complex way to indicate and measure a community's health in relation to variable drivers of social and economic success, and in coordination with policies that protect communities from external development forces over time, indicators seeking to measure livability, vibrancy, and affordability as a framework for equitable development will fail. In the following sections I will examine the design of livability indicator systems in transportation and cultural policy to see how frameworks of equity and economic development drive the production of these measurement tools.

Indicators: Transportation

The *Livability in Transportation Guidebook*, published by DOT in 2010, sought to align transit development with HUD and EPA strategies through a set of livability principles. These Livability Principles aimed to “coordinate federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to make neighborhoods more prosperous.”²²⁴ They encouraged municipal and state planners to direct infrastructure investment to “provide more transportation choices; promote equitable, affordable housing; enhance economic competitiveness; support existing

²²⁴ Partnership for Sustainable Communities. “About Us” Last Accessed May 2017. <https://web.archive.org/web/20170513040500/https://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/mission/about-us>.

communities; coordinate policies and leverage investment; value communities and neighborhoods.”²²⁵ Commonly referred to as Transit Oriented Development (TOD), this model of integrated urban planning and transit development attempts to address broad urbanization goals with transit projects. “By targeting transportation funding to support reinvestment in existing communities, we can build more choice, convenience and cost-effectiveness into the transportation system...support economic revitalization and community development, while improving transportation and housing affordability and quality of life.”²²⁶ While not a mandate by any means, the livability principles signal a shift in strategy for federal transportation funding, and the guidebook describes case studies where livability principles provide valuable context for advantageous socio-economic and cultural impacts.

Transportation initiatives that affect community livability aim to produce outcomes that “improve public health and safety, lower infrastructure costs, reduce combined household transportation and housing costs, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and improve air and water quality.”²²⁷ To show evidence of these impacts, a comprehensive and interdependent set of metrics are used to set benchmarks and measure goals. A livability indicator designed by HUD, DOT and EPA considers the intersection of policy topics like housing, land use, and transportation in relation to

²²⁵ Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

²²⁶ Rue, Harrison, Lisa McNally, Kathleen Rooney, Pepper Santalucia, Mary Raulerson, Jane Lim-Yap, Joel Mann, and Dan Burden. *Livability in Transportation Guidebook: Planning Approaches that Promote Livability*. Durham, NC: ICF International, 2010.

²²⁷ Federal Highway Administration. *Benefits of Livability*. Washington, DC: Author. Last updated June 28, 2017. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/fact_sheets/benefits.cfm.

geographies (i.e. county, municipality, neighborhood, and region), scale of urbanization (i.e. rural, suburban, and urban), and issues such as access and equity, affordability, economic competitiveness, environmental quality, public health, and community's sense of place.²²⁸ The matrix (Fig. 5) assisted planners to determine which metrics to use.

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Indicator Topic	Geographic Scale	Level of Urbanization	Issue of Concern
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> County	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural	<input type="checkbox"/> Access and equity
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipality	<input type="checkbox"/> Suburban	<input type="checkbox"/> Affordability
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood/Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban	<input type="checkbox"/> Community and Sense of Place
	<input type="checkbox"/> Project		<input type="checkbox"/> Economic competitiveness
	<input type="checkbox"/> Region		<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental quality
			<input type="checkbox"/> Public health

Figure 5: Partnership for Sustainable Community Indicator Matrix

Considering critics concern that the Green Line would have negative effects on access, equity and affordability in Corridor neighborhoods, a tool like the livability indicator identifies metrics that relate to topics of housing, land use, and transportation. The indicator suggests metrics including percentage of population within walking distance of frequent transit service, percentage of population served by transit, residential unit vacancy rate, percentage of new homes built near transit, number of new residential units permitted, and new housing construction.²²⁹

To test the value of these metrics consider the small Corridor neighborhood between Dale Street and North Mackburn, between University Avenue and West

²²⁸ Partnership for Sustainable Communities. "Indicators" Last Accessed May 2017. <https://web.archive.org/web/20170513075009/https://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/indicators/discover>.

²²⁹ Partnership for Sustainable Communities. "Indicators" Last Accessed May 2017. <https://web.archive.org/web/20170513075009/https://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/indicators/discover>.

Thomas Street, an area composed by 267 diverse minority households (27.5% Asian, 30% Black, 23.8% White, 12.6% Hispanic). It is not clear based on the indicator that Green Line would actually serve this small community with access to transportation and greater affordable housing options. Almost 40% of households in this neighborhood drive cars to work and the 36% that take public transportation are already served by buses, not light rail. The neighborhood also shows signs of diminishing affordability. A relatively high 7% vacancy rate accompanies high rates of housing construction since 2005 (17.6%). Neighborhoods just east and west have comparable vacancy rates but significantly less new housing construction (1.3%-3%).²³⁰ This suggests that the rapid development in this area will inevitably drive up rent. This kind of speculative growth may indicate opportunities for higher income earners wanting to move into the community, but less affordability and 'livability' for low income communities.

Indicators can provide a clue to the conditions of a more livable experience, but rarely give a full picture of change over time or the way different people experience development pressures. Indicators tend to affirm traditional values of home ownership but do not often reflect the way communities wish to or are forced to utilize housing stock (i.e. multi-generational homes, unorganized single room occupancy in unrelated households substituting for organized halfway houses serving community members returning from jail). Nor do housing metrics capture

²³⁰ City-Data.com. "Minneapolis, Minnesota."

[http://www.city-data.com/city/Minneapolis-Minnesota.html#mapOSM?mapOSM\[zi\]=16&mapOSM\[c1\]=44.95764667566249&mapOSM\[c2\]=-93.12309980392456&mapOSM\[s\]=blocks81&mapOSM\[fs\]=false&mapOSM\[pop\]=2712303260038](http://www.city-data.com/city/Minneapolis-Minnesota.html#mapOSM?mapOSM[zi]=16&mapOSM[c1]=44.95764667566249&mapOSM[c2]=-93.12309980392456&mapOSM[s]=blocks81&mapOSM[fs]=false&mapOSM[pop]=2712303260038).

displacement in the housing market caused by the repair and restoration of housing stock, lasting burden of foreclosure preventative loans, or other assistance that help keep some Corridor communities in place but under greater stress. Furthermore, the metrics do not describe forms of cultural cohesion like places of worship, grocery stores, and other small businesses that form the backbone for livability for Central Corridor residents.

The narrow focus on affordable housing and transportation access are often touted as sustainable community values, but they can hide gradual or impending processes of residential displacement. A 2009 report by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) exposed how transportation access without policies to keep prices from rising displaced people living in affordable housing.²³¹ In the 20 metropolitan areas surveyed by AARP researchers they found that more than 250,000 affordable apartments were located within one-half mile of public transit and another 200,000 within a quarter mile. This might suggest equitable access to affordable public transit for low income residents, except the study also found that two-thirds of federal subsidies that keep them affordable were set to expire within the next five years. In this way, public funding—used to advance community access—becomes a subsidy for private property developers and presents a daunting challenge for low income residents to remain in their communities.

²³¹ Harrell, Rodney, Allison Brooks, and Todd Nedwick. *Preserving Livability and Access in Affordable Communities: Subsidized Housing Opportunities near Transit and the 50+ Population*. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute, 2009.

Metrics promoting affordability and accessibility do not necessarily lead to equity. Increased numbers of available affordable units may hide increasing disparity between high and low income earners and obscure the pressure low-income people experience from rising rents and other cost of living factors. In the Corridor, as in other places undergoing redevelopment, the cultural context of displacement tells more complex stories than metrics can describe. I will discuss this later in the chapter.

Indicators: Cultural

The use of cultural metrics is increasingly relevant to cultural planning and placemaking. Currently, efforts are underway to create indicator models that align the arts sector with urban development indicator systems and shape culture's role in community livability.²³² Barriers to implementing cultural indicators include a lack of understanding among city planners of arts' potential role in redevelopment and limited availability of cultural metrics.²³³ In this section I review a variety of arts and cultural indicators including vitality, liveability and vibrancy in order to address the challenges art and cultural programs have in demonstrating their pertinence within an urban planning context. The cultural indicators being developed differ in the kind of impact they attempt to measure. Vitality indicators, for example, demonstrate the role of culture in fostering internal community strengths, whereas vibrancy indicators address culture's direct economic impact. Livability indicators seek to distinguish a

²³² Jackson, Maria, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquin Herranz. *Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2006. 26.

²³³ Jackson, Maria, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquin Herranz. 26.

middle ground between community and economic impact, but struggle to show quantifiable and meaningful change at the scale of urban development.

Research by the Urban Institute's Arts and Culture Indicator Project measured "cultural vitality" by identifying metrics that demonstrate the arts as a "dimension of everyday life in communities."²³⁴ Utilizing concepts of presence, participation, and support within the cultural sector, the Indicator Project created a vitality index to reframe the core contributions of cultural organizations and arts programs in their communities. *Presence* relates to the prevalence of arts infrastructures (i.e., organizations, venues, and cultural programming) across scale. *Participation* describes the way communities engage with the arts (i.e. attendance, but also involvement in arts education programs, professional and amateur artist practices). *Support* identifies the kinds of sponsorship—economic and otherwise—that enable cultural organizations to thrive. Comprehensive experiences of the presence, participation, and support of culture indicate the inherent and internal strength of a community, and the way communities express cultural belonging. This measure of a cultural economy is demonstrated in the ongoing efforts to develop and sustain arts infrastructure, foster funding networks, and advance public and personal art activities.

The Urban Institute's research suggests that measuring the existing cultural economy in a community is an indication of a community's overall health and wellbeing. "Our definition of cultural vitality calls for a much more complex concept of

²³⁴ Jackson, Maria, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquin Herranz. 4.

arts and cultural assets in communities and the resources required to bring these to fruition, sustain, or expand them...It recognizes arts and cultural participation as valuable on its own terms and also integral to everyday life, community dynamics, and community conditions.”²³⁵ The fundamental assertion of the vitality index is that cultural activities are indicative of the kinds of socioeconomic resources needed to sustain communities. In the case of the Central Corridor, the presence of multiple Hmong cultural, artistic, and service organizations points to active presence, participation, and support of cultural organizations by the community. The vitality index would seek to measure how the cultural economy sustains these organizations; it is also an indicator of the larger economic and social assets existing within Corridor communities.

The vitality index uses a number of metrics to measure existing cultural resources. This includes, but is not limited to, incident of working artists in communities; enrollments in arts programming, schools and classes; availability of youth arts programs; arts expenditure by economic or government agencies; private expenditures to arts organizations; art professional memberships; and volunteer hours expended in local arts nonprofits, churches, ethnic associations, and businesses hosting arts programming. Together these metrics contribute to a picture of community well being, internal strength, cultural attachment, and social trust.²³⁶

²³⁵ Jackson, Maria, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquin Herranz. 13-14.

²³⁶ Jackson, Maria, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquin Herranz. 20.

They also illustrate the kinds of institutional and cultural resources, organizations, and funding networks operating and supportive of these communities.

How these metrics interact with urban development indicators at a metro, regional, or even national scale is more complicated. To be effective for national policy, cultural data needs to be quantitative, publically available, regularly reported, and nationally comparable. In this way it can be tracked over multiple years to show change, to compare states, and to be available to researchers and policy makers across sectors. Very little cultural data meets these criteria.²³⁷ In the case of the Green Line, the breadth of cultural activity in the Corridor only becomes present to transit administrators in public comments. For people living in the Central Corridor, the presence of cultural agencies is undeniable. To planners examining economic and ridership data, the role played by local organizations is practically invisible. Without nationally or regionally comparable figures to identify and quantify culturally specific economic values circulating in communities, it is difficult to leverage cultural strategies as part of a regional or national urban development project.

Following the release of the Creative Placemaking white paper, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) made efforts to compose an indicator system that could interact with urban planning efforts and align with federal policy makers on issues like housing, health, education, and infrastructure reinvestment. The white paper addressed the intersection of placemaking with urban policy outcomes including “livability, diversity, jobs, and income,” but it did not distinguish evaluation

²³⁷ Jackson, Maria, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquin Herranz. 36.

metrics.²³⁸ The “Validating Arts and Livability Indicators (VALI) Study,” initiated by the NEA, took the initial step of testing publically available metrics for evaluating creative placemaking and cultural impact in terms of livability.²³⁹ Drawing respondents from grantees of the Our Town grant program, researchers proposed four indicators, or “livability dimensions.” These included residents’ attachment to communities; quality of life; local economic conditions; and arts and cultural activity. These dimensions served a similar purpose to presence, participation, and support in the vitality indicator. Each indicator in the VALI study was assigned quantitative, publically available, regularly reported, nationally comparable metrics significant within the framework of other federal departments.

To measure *resident attachment to community*, VALI considered metrics measuring capacity for homeownership, length of residence, proportion of housing units occupied, election turnout rate, and civic engagement establishments per 1000 population. To measure *quality of life*, metrics included median commute time, retail and service establishments per 1000 population, violent crime rate, and percent of residential addresses not collecting mail. To measure *local economic conditions*, metrics included median home purchase loan amounts, median household income, active business addresses, unemployment rate, and income diversity. To measure *arts and cultural activity*, metrics included median earnings of residents employed in arts; proportion of employees working in arts; payroll of arts establishments; arts,

²³⁸ Markusen, Ann, and Anne Gadwa. *Creative Placemaking: A White Paper for The Mayor’s Institute on City Design*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2010.

²³⁹ Morley, Elaine, and Mary Winkler. *The Validating Arts and Livability Indicators (VALI) Study: Results and Recommendations*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, April 2014.

culture, and humanities non-profits per 1000 population; and arts establishments per 1000 population.

The NEA's study considered respondents' perceptions of the four indicators and their relatedness to concepts of livability and placemaking. The study also considered respondents' perception of associated metrics as meaningful attributes of those indicators. Generally, respondents understood and validated the relevance of indicator language and how socio demographic metrics related to quality of life. What respondents struggled to accept was the capacity of arts programming to register change at even the smallest scale—census tract and county—of each metric. While they understood their work as applicable to the values and underlying conditions in their communities, they did not believe their creative placemaking programs could independently move the needle at such a large geographic scale. “Given the relatively small size and scope of many creative placemaking efforts in the context of the larger community, many participants believed these projects could not have much effect on these indicators.”²⁴⁰

The inability of artists to recognize their impact jeopardizes the whole creative placemaking project. For a funding agency like the NEA this research suggests that creative placemaking may only be effective as a supplementary addition to larger economic development programs. This means that creative placemaking's impact remains within scope of traditional public art practices including sculptural work, art

²⁴⁰ Morley, Elaine , and Mary K. Winkler. “Assessing a Set of Indicators for Creative Placemaking: Reflections From the Field.” *Community Development Investment Review* 10, no. 2 (2014): 49-55. <https://www.frbsf.org/community-development/files/assessing-a-set-of-indicators-for-creative-placemaking-reflections-from-the-field.pdf>.

in public places, community art, or socially engaged art practices.²⁴¹ It does not therefore enlarge the cultural economic framework in which artists operate and effect change in society. Their forms, like previous public art media with histories of their own are important but not effective as a comprehensive strategy for artist-led community redevelopment. Alternatively, the study's results give credence to creative placemaking only in terms of economic impact and at the measurable scale of traditional performance venues.

ArtPlace America initial indicator measurements took the approach of measuring creative placemaking in accordance with economic development, however focusing on how smaller artistic activities could be as effective as large scale economic impact measurements. By 2014, ArtPlace had distributed \$42.1 million through their Innovation Grants program, which gave 134 grants to 124 organizations in 79 communities across the U.S.²⁴² ArtPlace's Vibrancy Indicator utilized proprietary metrics to determine the effectiveness of placemaking projects in relation to economic and consumer activity within a specifically defined area. Metrics included changes in population density, number of workers in creative occupations, overall employment rates, presence of cultural, recreational, and consumer destinations, walkability scores, cell phone activity, and number of mixed-use

²⁴¹ Kwon, Miwon. *One place after another: site-specific art and locational identity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

²⁴² ArtPlace. "15 Questions to Ask about Creative Placemaking Proposals." ArtPlace America. <https://web.archive.org/web/20140708120616/http://www.artplaceamerica.org/articles/15-questions-to-ask-about-creative-placemaking-proposals/>.

properties, independent businesses, and creative industry jobs.²⁴³ By and large, these Vibrancy Indicators focused narrowly on economic and consumer gains and instrumentalized arts programming as a driver of commercial economies. Measurements indicating increasing consumer density, cultural tourism, and weekend cell phone activity were by and large cultural measurements pointing toward increasing consumer values and areas being quickly economized.

ArtPlace's funding of private and commercial enterprise aligns with the intended outcomes and profile of the Innovation Grants program. Innovation Grants were designed to provide "venture funding" for arts strategies that served the purpose of economic development and revitalization.²⁴⁴ ArtPlace drew a lot of criticism for their evaluative metrics being a tool for artwashing and gentrification in support of private development. What the Vibrancy Indicators lacked was a comprehensive and counter-balancing measure of community cohesion and people's capacity to remain in their places. As evidenced by their funding in Philadelphia's Villages of Arts and Culture and Spruce Street Harbor Park, ArtPlace was actively funding projects that were both deeply embedded and responsive to community development efforts as well as straight forward economic development attractions. Therefore, the criticisms of artwashing, while valid, miss an important question about whether arts can stimulate economic growth while just as powerfully

²⁴³ ArtPlace. "Vibrancy Indicators." Accessed July 29, 2017. <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/>.

²⁴⁴ ArtPlace. "Invitation for Letter of Inquiry: ArtPlace America 2014 Innovation Grants Program." *ArtPlace America*. https://web.archive.org/web/20140727143938/http://www.artplaceamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/2014_ArtPlaceAmerica_LOIguidelines.pdf.

creating community cohesion. For low income communities and especially rural communities, this balance is essential. Communities need and want to capture and control capital. If artist can help direct the work of community economic development, then artists do stand to be a powerful force in community development strategies.

ArtPlace's funding of *Irrigate* in connection with the Green Line is an important example of creative placemaking support for artist communities directly focused on supporting commercial activity while also strengthening the cultural visibility and sustainability of existing communities. Springboard for the Arts, the recipient of the funds, is a long time St. Paul "economic and community development organization for artists and by artists." Their mission is both artist and community centric, focused on providing professional development and services for artists in relation to artists' work and creative investment in their own communities. The *Irrigate* project utilized artists during the period of rail construction to help mitigate disruptions to local businesses along the Central Corridor. Springboard provided over 600 local artists training in community engagement practices and supported 150 placemaking projects connecting artists with local businesses.

Irrigate helped build social and economic capital along the corridor and provide skill training for artists in community development practices.²⁴⁵ Art projects included dance and musical performances in convenient stores and restaurants, murals, and performative neighborhood tours. Artist training strengthened

²⁴⁵ Wang, Jun-Li, and Peter Haakon Thompson. "Irrigate: Artist-Led Creative Placemaking." *Springboard for the Arts*. <https://springboardforthearts.org/programs/irrigate/>.

professional and creative skills among existing artist communities and activated artistic and community assets for citywide engagement. Coupled with small business loans and other mitigation efforts, *Irrigate* modeled an approach to arts as one part of a larger transit development effort.

Irrigate also sought to explicitly change the narrative around the Green Line construction from a focus on service disruption to stories about community owned businesses along the corridor. The over 30 million social and print media impressions generated by artist projects with local businesses helped depict the area as alive and well and drove commerce to affected Corridor businesses. While *Irrigate* was a productive social arts program in service to consumer and economic goals, its artists also appeared to strengthen cultural vitality and enhance economic resources among a small minority of business owners fearful of more destructive market forces.

However, once again the question of measuring outcomes is challenging. Media impressions and positive narratives probably don't generate enough business income to actually overcome the burden of rising rents. While artists trained to work better in their communities by identifying needs and becoming more civically involved is a good thing, how does this measurably strengthen a whole neighborhoods resilience against a changing marketplace driven by transportation development? Does work focused for just two years on mitigating business disruptions caused by construction create generational wealth? Probably not.

Indicators: Outcome Problems

Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, co-author of the Creative Placemaking white paper, laments the “fuzzy indicators” that evolved around the concept of creative placemaking. Nicodemus argues that broad interpretations among practitioners and philanthropists about concepts like liveability and vibrancy, and “tension in policy and practice between gentrification and social-equity agendas” has created a lack of clarity around the placemaking concept.²⁴⁶ “A key challenge in the next phase of [creative placemaking] policy’s life will be balancing the ideals in the policy rhetoric to the more concrete realities measured as outcomes.”²⁴⁷ Author and cultural researcher Ian David Moss writes, in a 2012 blog post, “Creative Placemaking has an Outcomes Problem.”²⁴⁸ Moss argues that one of the primary reasons for placemaking funders to develop indicators is their inability to determine which policies create intended outcomes.²⁴⁹ A project may indicate it’s a part of a fundable and well positioned community, but any given project may not be the cause of that community’s success. Moss suggests that for indicators to serve as reliable tools for foundations they must be clearly grounded in a theory of change that connects

²⁴⁶ Nicodemus, Anne Gadwa. “Fuzzy Vibrancy: Creative Placemaking as Ascendant U.S. Cultural Policy.” *Cultural Trends* 22, no. 3-4 (2013): 213-222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2013.817653>. 17.

²⁴⁷ Nicodemus, Anne Gadwa. 14.

²⁴⁸ Moss, Ian. “[Createequity Reruns] Creative Placemaking has an Outcomes Problem.” June 30, 2014. <http://createequity.com/2014/06/createequity-reruns-creative-placemaking-has-an-outcomes-problem>.

²⁴⁹ Moss, Ian. “[Createequity Reruns] Creative Placemaking has an Outcomes Problem.” June 30, 2014. <http://createequity.com/2014/06/createequity-reruns-creative-placemaking-has-an-outcomes-problem/>. 3.

project activities with equally specific and measurable project outcomes.²⁵⁰ Without a clear framework for determining *how* meaningful social change happens, indicator tools will lack an ability to concretely and effectively analyze impact. Instead, placemaking will intentionally and inadvertently support private interests and forge pathways toward gentrification.²⁵¹

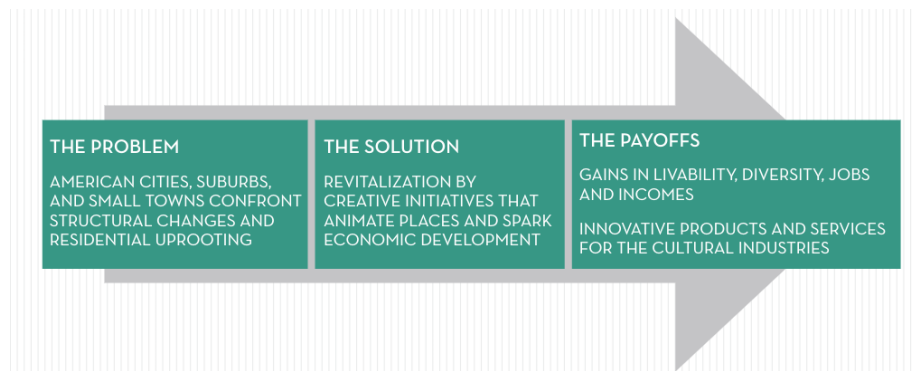


Figure 6: Creative Placemaking Social Impact Design

I contend that placemaking's problem is not its indicators or its outcomes, but the limits of a design that emerged out of moment of economic crisis and stimulus funding. At this critical moment, private and public partners applied too narrow a lens on art and artists' capacity to support economic and community development. The above graphic (fig. 3) taken from the 2010 Placemaking White Paper sets up the flow of intended placemaking outcomes. Beginning with "The Problem," it is clear that placemaking recognizes "structural changes and residential uprooting," caused by the financial collapse. As detailed in the previous chapters, structural changes

²⁵⁰ Moss, Ian. "[Createequity Reruns] Creative Placemaking has an Outcomes Problem." June 30, 2014. <http://createequity.com/2014/06/createequity-reruns-creative-placemaking-has-an-outcomes-problem/>. 4.

²⁵¹ Moss, Ian. "[Createequity Reruns] Creative Placemaking has an Outcomes Problem." June 30, 2014. <http://createequity.com/2014/06/createequity-reruns-creative-placemaking-has-an-outcomes-problem/>. 4-5.

facing cities would imply increasing poverty in suburban areas, increasing segregation between communities with high and low incomes, increasing rates of foreclosure and displacement, increasing debt and wealth disparity, generational shifts in racial and ethnic demographics organized by geography, and structural crisis in the safety net. “The Solution,” that placemaking offers, however, is only a narrow strategy for advancing innovation economies.

The rhetoric among both arts and non-arts funders presumed that artists’ could transform community and bring about material social and economic impacts, however, by design, creative placemaking instrumentalized those impacts within a narrow field of innovation. Creative Placemaking, as *initially* designed, is not a comprehensive solution to structural inequality in America, but a singular approach to stimulating and concentrating assets in commercial districts. Creative Placemaking mistook the innovation that artists bring to the table as best serving an urbanist project of creative industry pertaining to a highly educated, technological workforce. Creative Placemaking did not suppose that artists would be effective in working with communities facing deeply endemic structural challenges. However, the history of community art and socially engaged art suggests otherwise, and when artists began applying for creative placemaking funding with projects intended to address these more critical challenges, foundation and city leaders throughout the country hadn’t caught up to the idea. Creative placemaking, at the outset was seen as a tool for gentrification by artists engaging in critical, contemporary, socially engaged practice. This is why Aviva at the Villages of Arts and Humanities

challenges the placemaking field to recognize a more critical social impact of art and creative placemaking's power.

Other models for creative placemaking already existed that focused on the utilization and development of existing cultural infrastructures to support community resilience against these more endemic problems. Research by the Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP), a research group at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice, ongoing since 1994, presents evidence that cultural activity at the neighborhood level has direct and indirect social impact, including reduction of poverty, increased population, patterns of gradual growth rather than rapid gentrification, increased civic participation, lowered truancy and delinquency rates, and increased connection across community sectors.²⁵² "Although their direct economic impact may be small, the research indicates that community cultural programs can have a substantial impact on the quality and prosperity of their neighborhoods."²⁵³ As suggested by the vitality index, cultural activity is itself indicative of a community's strength. When cultural communities are strategically strengthened they can create tangible assets in the whole community. However, the problem remains that "collective efficacy" is difficult to quantify, and without quantifiable and economic data it can be difficult to advocate for supporting existing

²⁵² Social Impact for the Arts (SIAP). "Culture Builds Community: The Power of Arts and Culture in Community Building." *Culture Builds Community* 3 (2002). https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=siap_culture_builds_community. 1.

²⁵³ Social Impact for the Arts (SIAP). 2.

cultural organizations rather than funding new cultural projects that promise significant new economic value.²⁵⁴

Cultural planning efforts that attend to economic development as a primary driver often focus funding on “cultural anchors” rather than existing community assets. Conversely, cultural planning efforts that attend to community development as a primary driver often focus attention on existing grassroot “pillar organizations.” The importance of this distinction has to do as much with the desired outcomes of cultural projects and the kind of measurable impacts they wish to show. Cultural anchors are destination drivers, and they capture significant amounts of capital despite large infrastructures, maintenance, and operational costs. Large projects like performing art centers, greenways, and programmed parks feature prominently as the basis of cultural planning efforts because they project direct economic impact, including jobs, ticket revenue, attendance numbers, tax revenue, property value, and associated private investments.

Pillar organizations produce other forms of value, supporting existing community relations, financial infrastructures, and local jobs. Recalling the Central Corridor in the Twin Cities, pillar organizations are like Hmong Art & Talent, Hmong Cultural Center, Springboard for the Arts, and Confederation of Somali Community all support economic resources within their communities. They foster connective links outside their sector, bridge audiences, civic leadership, and increase gradual cultural and economic investments. Pillar institutions advance cultural diversity,

²⁵⁴ Social Impact for the Arts (SIAP). 3.

sustain and protect existing community practices from dominant market forces.²⁵⁵

While pillar organizations don't produce the same scale of direct economic impact as cultural anchors, they can be effective places for investment if the theory of change in a redevelopment project understands sustaining existing communities as the best means for creating livability. I now return to the case of the Green Line to look at the models that drove the planning and development of the line and the way that a public private partnership was formed to address aspects of community-economic development that was not being addressed by the transportation authority.

The Green Line: Designing Growth

The Green Line was not designed to service communities living inside the Central Corridor. The plan explicitly intended to use transportation development as a catalyst for increasing economic development and serving business-class professionals at the center of a much larger metropolitan region spanning the Twin Cities.²⁵⁶ While the Corridor accounts for nearly 150,000 people, it is only 4.5% of the total Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan population of 2.6 million. Despite the low number of residents, the Corridor contains over 20% of the total metro area employment with 314,700 jobs.²⁵⁷ It is host to multiple national bank and insurance headquarters, including Wells Fargo with close to 5000 employees,²⁵⁸ and

²⁵⁵ Jackson, Maria, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquin Herranz. 5.

²⁵⁶ Metropolitan Council. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2003. 1-3.

²⁵⁷ Metropolitan Council. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2003. 3-4.

²⁵⁸ Black, Sam. "Wells Fargo Opens \$300M Downtown Minneapolis Office Towers." *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal*. Updated July 25, 2016. <https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2016/07/21/wells-fargo-opens-minneapolis-twin-towers-offices.html>.

Minnesota Life. There are also major sports and entertainment complexes, including the Target Center, and US Bank Stadium, which was completed after the Green Line opened. As a TOD project, the Green Line's purpose was to transform the Corridor, its two downtowns and University of Minnesota campus into a concentrated commercial, educational, and economic zone for the state and region.

As part of a regional growth strategy, transportation planners forecasted an 18.5% population growth in metro-area by 2020, to over 3 million people. Employment was expected to grow an additional 18.4% in the same period. Within the Corridor, populations were expected to increase by 21.7% with an additional 26,000 people and 11,400 households. In 2006, at the time of the initial planning draft, employment in the Corridor was expected to rise by 21.9%, accounting for almost 69,000 new jobs.²⁵⁹ The prediction of increased populations and business was backed by an assumption that light rail captures a more desired ridership (i.e. business commuters with aversion to buses) that would lead to increased re-development along the Corridor. The theory of change, as it were, was that public infrastructure investment would catalyze private re-development, corporate and entertainment growth. By going back to review the planning process in depth it can be seen how public agencies failed in their responsibility to citizens and how private foundations attempting to create accountability and equitable economic impact struggled to do so comprehensively.

²⁵⁹ Metropolitan Council. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2003. 3-4.

In the continuing Green Line case study, I review the Metropolitan Council's original project goals and objectives and consider how the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC) was formed to balance the demands for regional economic investment with local business and resident support. Through a lens of livability I consider how multiple strategies shaped by CCFC sought to support, sustain, and grow cultural cohesion and neighborhood economies in the context of a much larger economic development project. I examine strategies deployed around livability, including efforts to increase vibrancy through financial, technical, and cultural programming. I considered additional outcomes including economic self-determination within the business community. I also evaluate the way in which these intended outcomes failed to fully address issues of affordability necessary to prevent long-term displacement of low-income residents Corridor.

The Green Line: A Narrow Scope

In line with “livable communities” principles, the Metropolitan Council constructed a framework focused on social, economic, and environmental objectives.²⁶⁰ Preliminary planning goals weighed regional growth strategies through a three part framework of “economic opportunity,” “communities and environment,” and “transportation and mobility.” Their framework called for “efficient, effective” land use policy (economic opportunity), “preservation and enhancement” of neighborhoods (communities and environment), and increased transportation capacity, including for those with transit dependency (transportation and mobility).²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ Metropolitan Council. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2003. 1-3.

²⁶¹ Metropolitan Council. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2003. 1-3.

Land use policy focused on limiting sprawl and increasing residential and commercial density. Their policy included an overlay district with tax-incentives and zoning ordinances for higher density development near stations.²⁶² According to the plan, train stations distributed at regular intervals would serve populations within one-third mile of the line and spur development of vacant lots and underdeveloped parcels within a half-mile of proposed stations.²⁶³ Connections to existing regional rails, buses, and even bikes paths sought to connect riders from across the region with over 400 employment centers and 132,000 jobs. Cost per rider metrics served to indicate the LTR's economic efficiency.

While transit oriented economic development strategies are detailed, the Metropolitan Council's approach to "neighborhood and community character and cohesion" is exceedingly limited. Their considerations rely on consumer land use and transportation policies rather than robust community development principles. There was no discussion of affordability and housing access, small business growth, new parks, or jobs for area residents. Instead, the plan focused on avoiding disruption to existing pedestrian and bicycle routes, transit access to community facilities, and decreased traffic and speed along the Corridor.²⁶⁴ Even streetscape enhancements focus on the development of commercial centers.²⁶⁵ Despite the

²⁶² Metropolitan Council. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2003. 7-12, 13.

²⁶³ Metropolitan Council. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2003. 7-3.

²⁶⁴ Metropolitan Council. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2003. 7-3.

²⁶⁵ Metropolitan Council. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Minneapolis: MN, August 2003. 7-13.

stated outcome of community character and cohesion, no plans for enhancing neighborhood are introduced. Rather it is simply determined that development is “unlikely to have major negative impacts on the existing residential neighborhoods” a block north and south.

From its earliest planning drafts, the Metropolitan Council’s narrow scope and vision are worked into the planning strategy and statements. Despite a language of livability, there is a consistent failure to recognize the larger scope of concern for how transit development affect people inside the Corridor. The immediate concerns surrounding construction disruption becomes the focal point of community conversation and the Council’s responsibility, which they at first resist but eventually address. A belief that community impacts would isolated to just the corridor further limits the scope of accountability to a single street even when the system is designed to serve an increasingly large ridership and catalyze new residential development to serve growing populations.

The narrowness of scope contained in the Council’s technocratic planning process emphasizes the most immediate needs rather than planning for long term impacts. The inability to recognize and reconcile the negative consequences that development has on places and people plagues many planning processes. In this way, a technocratic process creates a persistent blindness to larger social and economic challenges evident in the lives of people living in the Corridor. Even if increasing transparency, public involvement, and greater attention to cultural planning and livability were essential from the beginning of a process, planners

seem to be missing basic tools for conducting effective community planning, protecting land as a community resource, and investing in rooted cultural assets. They are missing tax and financing measures for returning development dollars back to communities, and they are missing community development and land banking institutions that support community profits and ownership.

The Green Line: Private Partnerships

Because of lawsuits filed by community advocates reacting to the initial phase of the Metropolitan Council's plan, The Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC), a consortium of 14 local and national foundations committed \$12 million and awarded 162 grants to help strengthen and protect existing Corridor communities. CCFC created nine community working groups whose primary goals included advancing local Corridor economies, access to affordable housing, and increasing cultural and economic vitality along the line.²⁶⁶ Funds were committed for 10 years, from 2007-2016 during planning, construction, and the first two years of the Green Line's operation. Funding restrictions limit the overall scope of private philanthropic commitments. Nevertheless, CCFC served as an important instrument for cultivating self-determined cultural and economic organizing among local businesses and communities.

CCFC addressed affordable housing concerns by focusing on three strategies: production and preservation of affordable housing, neighborhood stabilization, and quality of life improvements. CCFC and the Metropolitan Council

²⁶⁶ Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC). *About a Community Not a Commute: Investing Beyond the Rail Final Report*. Minneapolis, MN: CCFC, June 2016. 9.

created benchmarks for creating affordable housing and ratios intended to keep the construction of market rate units in line with affordable housing availability. CCFC coordinated with non-profit lenders and community land banks to provide rental assistance, homeless services, and support for land acquisition for developers with mixed-income housing plans.²⁶⁷ These efforts aimed to comprehensively ensure housing access at equitable levels and in pace with market rate developments.

CCFC addressed small business concerns through assistance programs, grants, and forgivable loans designed to help businesses navigate construction periods and emerge better able to benefit from the new line.²⁶⁸ Funds supported facade renovation, business sustainability, marketing and parking assistance. Merchant associations and ethnic business coalitions like the Asian Economic Development Association and African Economic Development Solutions were created during this period. They continue to represent needs within their communities. Also during this period neighborhood designations like Little Mekong, Little Africa, and a Creative Enterprise Zone emerged, reinforced by wayfinding signage at transit stations that direct traffic to area businesses, and brand the Corridor's commercial and cultural identity for riders.

Despite a seemingly comprehensive approach, issues of affordability and housing ultimately received fewer total resources than business sustainability and cultural vibrancy efforts. Of a total 9 working groups organized by the CCFC, only

²⁶⁷ Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC). 16.

²⁶⁸ Metropolitan Council. *Status Report On the Implementation of Mitigation Measures - CCLRT Construction-Related Business Impacts*. Minneapolis, MN: Metropolitan Council, April 2012. 3.

one group focused on issues of affordable housing.²⁶⁹ Issues of affordability received only 11% of total funding (\$1,359,650) and 7% of total grants (12) as opposed to business and economic support, which received 34% of total funding (\$4,032,033) and 27% of the total number of grants (43). Vibrancy measures, like cultural programming, facade renovations and wayfinding signage received 44% of total funding (\$5,280,625) and 44% of the total number of grants (71). 450 small businesses received \$3,135,430 in loans, 212 businesses were aided with \$3.9 million in forgivable loans, \$260,000 was provided for façade renovation grants leveraging nearly \$2 million in additional private funding for capital renovations and technical assistance. Taken as a whole, grant outlays by CCFC suggest a reduced focus on affordability for at-risk, low income families.²⁷⁰

Using indicators relating local economy, vibrancy, and housing affordability, CCFC tracked changes in the Corridor from 2010 to 2016. Since the Green Line's opening in 2014 ridership increased by 2,900 riders per day, reaching 37,400 weekday riders, only 9% below ridership goals set for 2030 (41,000 riders/weekday). CCFC also tracked street-level business openings and closings. 128 street-level businesses opened during construction and 115 businesses closed, amounting to a net gain of only 13 businesses. However, of businesses that received assistance through loans, grants, and training, only 1% closed during the construction period. This suggests that despite business turnover resulting from construction and market

²⁶⁹ Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC). 11.

²⁷⁰ Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC). 11.

trends, investment and support may have mitigated more extensive closure of existing business.

On the other hand, few other measurements showed significant impact. From 2010-2016 population in the Corridor increased by 14% but median income decreased slightly and household types remained unchanged. Business in the Corridor appear to be on trend with the larger metropolitan area. The Corridor lost 4% of its commercial establishments compared to a metropolitan average of 1% business loss (roughly 276 businesses down from 6906 in 2010). Aggregating data to address business size, the Corridor gained 10% in the number of businesses with 100-250 employees and lost 9% of its small businesses with 5 employees or less. Metrowide, large businesses were up 16% while small businesses were down 4%. Small businesses across the board struggled following the 2008 market crash, while larger business consolidated and gained market share. In job growth, the Corridor was up 3% against 7% in the metro region, but here too, growth is uneven. Certain neighborhoods in downtown Minneapolis gained jobs while poorer areas in the eastern part of the Central Corridor and in St. Paul showed losses.

Regarding housing affordability, CCFC tracked low and very low household incomes, durability of existing affordable housing, median home market values, changes in rental rates, transportation costs, owner/renter occupied properties, and cost of living burden. CFCC found that between 2010 and 2016 housing density increased in the Corridor with 4757 housing units added since 2010. Moreover 1,198 affordable units were added in the area, bringing the total number of affordable units

preserved or new to 3573, 79% of their ten-year goal of 4500 affordable units. Yet despite increased access to affordable housing, increasing rent and cost of living negatively affected low and very low income populations. The total percentage of low and very low income residents living in the Corridor didn't change over the six years but the rent burdened for low-income renters increased significantly from 70% of total income to 74%. In the rental market there is evidence in only one year of rapid increases of median rents by over \$500, with even the most depressed areas of the Corridor experiencing 5% rent increases. At the same time, homeownership rates appear to have declined with fewer than 1/3 of Corridor households now owning their homes. For those who owned their homes, there appeared a 30% increase in foreclosure prevention, mortgage, and rehab loans suggesting new long-term burdens brought on by the housing market collapse. As often is the case, development doesn't affect populations uniformly but creates significant disparity between the ends of the spectrum with greater burden on those most vulnerable populations.²⁷¹

In truth, projects of this scale take more than a decade to produce and their cultural and economic impacts take equally long to become visible as trends. Metrics showing decreases in home ownership, increases in rent burden, and income stagnation among very low income residents living in the Corridor are on trend with the larger metropolitan area and cannot be understood outside the context of the larger national housing market crash. Despite vigorous community feedback,

²⁷¹ Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC). *Central Corridor Tracker: Progress Beyond the Rail Final Report*. Minneapolis, MN: CCFC, June 2016.

working groups, innovative community-arts practices, and business coalitions the measurable results of affordability for Corridor showed little or no change, or worse, indicate the beginning of increasing vulnerability for the lowest income individuals.

What is missed in the quantitative indicators is the capacity of Corridor communities to respond to, endure, and be resilient in the face of social and economic changes. There is evidence to the effect that programs like *Irrigate* served exactly these purposes. Artistically designed community and social history projects, like “Roots of Rondo” created intergenerational exchanges that advanced relationships between Rondo residents and the Twin City arts community. Keeping Rondo’s narrative of resilience against earlier urban upheaval relevant to a new generation, and showcasing the community’s own contemporary creative strength supports the cultural and political voice of community members over time.²⁷² Projects that drove consumers to the Corridor did more than temporarily increase cash flow. Mai Nyugen, owner of the Mai Village Restaurant, along University Avenue, faced a decreasing customer base and significant threat of closure. *Jazz on the Line* brought musical performances, new audiences, and consumers to shops along the Corridor. Adaptability, however, may be a more important outcome than cashflow. According to Ms. Nyugen, “First I hesitate because I don’t know [the program], but now I know it and I want it...it open my eyes into different [way] to run the business.”²⁷³ A subtle

²⁷² Springboard for the Arts. “Roots of Rondo: Black Artists Rising.” Filmed summer 2016 in Minneapolis, MN. Video, 6:32. February 16, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTwcGTkCf6E&t=196s>.

²⁷³ Springboard for the Arts.. “Placemaking at Mai Village Restaurant.” Filmed in Minneapolis, MN. Video, 3:49. January 28, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KE7krTkLbgc>.

shift in business perspective combined with introductions to the city's cultural sector and a new customer base helped mobilize this locally owned restaurant to adapt to imminent changes in the business and cultural environment.

In conclusion, the case of the Green Line demonstrates how transit oriented development struggles to exceed its narrow scope and planning vision in order to effectively respond to existing communities' challenges. It is also the case that philanthropic intervention may more effectively and flexibly pressure governments to create community-specific and more equitable outcomes. However, philanthropy can struggle with a similarly narrow scope. Limited by funding timelines and partnership coalitions, philanthropic leaders can drive funds toward clearly measurable outcomes, like the number of affordable units without looking at the larger set of conditions that truly affect community wellbeing. And while philanthropy can bring a flexibility to an otherwise highly structured, technocratic process, funders may lose sight of the bigger picture while attending to short term community issues and striving for achievable metric oriented outcomes like access.

Most important, perhaps, are the ways in which community self determination and sustainability was addressed through the emergence of business associations, cultural partnerships, and artist training. Community run associations and cooperatives provide continuity for community issues that extend beyond the construction timeline and across commercial, residential, and cultural needs. By being intimately connected to the lives of their community, they are best situated to advocate, address emerging issues in their community, and celebrate culturally and

intergenerationally the life of their community. There existence is a tangible asset of the planning process itself, exceeding the limited scope of rail lines, foundation dollars, and transportation authorities.

Conclusions

The idea of building more livable communities drives much of today's development discourse and captures a collective image of the ideal place. Livability is nothing more than the general sentiment that people should live comfortably in their communities without excessive economic, social, and environmental burdens with access to those resources and amenities that make life within a community sustainable. In light of this idea, decade's old development approaches to housing, transportation, health and human services appear archaic, siloed, and unresponsive. They seem to misunderstand the fundamental connectedness of human conditions and the role of architecture, geography and place in the way people live.

Under the Obama Administration, the federal government, in partnership with private philanthropy and non-profit agencies set about revising the process of community and urban development. Through guidelines, grants, and metrics they pushed local planners and politicians to design better, more holistic solutions for community and economic betterment. As the administration flooded the country with billions in stimulus funding, they sought to incentivize the integration of cultural, government, and economic sectors, in order to support more multi-dimensional solutions to addressing basic community needs. While the older placeforms of housing and transportation still anchor the way cities develop, who is at the table

during planning, and what values and outcomes these partners seek to address is changing. Indicators, like livability, vitality, vibrancy, simply make it possible to identify the variable community outcomes and determine a strategy toward betterment.

However, as development practices are transforming, planners' and policy makers' understanding of gentrification has not fully evolved. Gentrification is not a monolithic, economic state, or an inevitable occurrence. It is a process that happens over time, even decades through phases of disinvestment and decline, devaluation, reinvestment, and eventually displacement.²⁷⁴ Defined simply, gentrification is a "process of neighborhood change that results in the replacement of lower income residents with higher income ones."²⁷⁵ However, gentrification is not only about economic disparity and outpaced costs of living that lead to displacement. It is also about forms of social difference and symbolic shifts in power that signal what place means to a community.

Researchers at the University of Minnesota conducted a study of gentrification in the Twin Cities between 2000-2015. Their findings show that both quantitatively and qualitatively, the drivers and outcomes of gentrification are unique in every part of the city. The gentrification they document in the Central Corridor is tangibly different than the gentrification they document in Northern Minneapolis.

²⁷⁴ Goetz, Edward, Brittany Lewis, Anthony Damiano, and Molly Calhoun. *The Diversity of Gentrification: Multiple Forms of Gentrification in Minneapolis and St. Paul*. Minneapolis: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota, 2019. <http://gentrification.umn.edu/>. 3.

²⁷⁵ Kennedy, Maureen, and Paul Leonard. *Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution and PolicyLink, April 2001. 4.

Traditional images of gentrification imagine wealthier individuals moving into a neighborhoods, increasing property values and rents, and displacing poorer residents. However, in Minneapolis, median household income in both gentrifying and non-gentrifying neighborhoods declined from 2000 to 2015. At the same time, the percentage of people living below the poverty line increased. In some areas of the Central Corridor where metropolitan sprawl and years of divestment made land less valuable, displacement still occurred even though overall median incomes in the area declined. This follows a speculative development model where infrastructure investment and housing prematurely cause area rents to increase, coupled with lags in housing adoption. Even our assumptions about gentrification and race don't uniformly fit. Certain gentrifying neighborhoods in Minneapolis gained minority populations.

Regardless of metrics and indicators, what planners seem to miss is the way communities *experience* gentrification. Responses from area residents demonstrate the more challenging issues of race and power that factor into ideas of gentrification and community livability. First and foremost, 80% of respondents living in gentrifying neighborhoods correlated their perception of impending gentrification with seeing white people in their neighborhood. Two-thirds of respondents noted the presence of “coming soon” signs in store fronts windows. Together, these visual markers accompany real and presumed experiences of rising rents and increasing housing prices.²⁷⁶ The presence of whiteness and business intended for new consumers

²⁷⁶ Goetz, Edward, Brittany Lewis, Anthony Damiano, and Molly Calhoun. 2.

indicate to residents a very real accumulation of wealth and power that they themselves do not share. In areas like the Corridor where the city stopped investing in infrastructure for decades, and where signs of investment primarily came in the form of government subsidy, the community perception of growth and change centered on relationships to family, neighbors, and worship communities. Human relationships and trust sustain communities against memories of renewal and disruption. A sudden difference in a place is not solely an economic shift or cultural shift, but first a perceptual warning, often heralded by the presence of white people in a place at one time abandoned by white people. What makes gentrification so frightening is that it is what development looks like when it happens to a community and not from or with a community.

In the final chapter I consider what community development looks like when it happens with and in community. In this context I ask ‘how art works’ in order to consider more critically its social benefits and capacities to strengthen internal bonds between community members as well as externally support a more balanced economic and community development practice. I look at the Cooperative Community of New West Jackson, a land trust in Jackson, Mississippi. The Cooperative is transforming its community from the ground up by considering what it takes to move a neighborhood from a condition of surviving to thriving. The Cooperative operates on the belief that community development and change happens at the speed of trust, and it uses radical forms of farming, housing development, and artist residencies to reimagine a social basis for economic growth

and community self-determination. What I discovered through this case study and in relation to cultural policies that also emerged alongside creative placemaking is that art works as a capacity building tool through communicative and performative structure that both express and enact vision and intentionality.

Chapter 5 | How Art Works:

Introduction: The Cooperative Community of New West Jackson

In 2012, Nia and Takuma Umoja journeyed to Jackson, Mississippi to view a house on the foreclosure market. Jackson was brimming with Black revolutionary fervor, stirred by the campaign and impending mayoral election of Chokwe Lumumba, a longtime member of the Republic of New Afrika and founder of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement.²⁷⁷ Lumumba promised “a revolutionary transformation” in Jackson by growing the economy through infrastructure investment, cooperative structures, and a solidarity economy.²⁷⁸ “The creation of jobs is not an individual affair but a collective. The mission is to accomplish economic development together,” he told journalists.²⁷⁹ Social activists and Black nationalists from across the US, especially the South, heeded Lumumba’s declaration that “Jackson is rising,”²⁸⁰ and began establishing partnerships and cooperative enterprises throughout the city.²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ “Chokwe Lumumba.” Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chokwe_Lumumba#cite_note-25.

²⁷⁸ Flanders, Laura. “Remembering Chokwe Lumumba.” *Yes!*, February 26, 2014. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/commonomics/remembering-lumumba>.

²⁷⁹ Flanders, Laura. “Remembering Chokwe Lumumba.”

²⁸⁰ Flanders, Laura. “Remembering Chokwe Lumumba.”

²⁸¹ “Jackson Rising: New Economies Conference.” Jackson Rising. <https://jacksonrising.wordpress.com/>.

The house Nia and Takuma were visiting was located in West Jackson, at the beginning of a long residential street and beside a neighborhood dumping ground. As Nia describes the house, there was no door, windows, or siding left, but the “the floors and the roof looked good.”²⁸² The bank wanted \$30,000 and Nia laughed, saying she wouldn’t pay over \$1500. The bank agreed, and in April 2012 Nia and Takuma bought the house, and began to restore their new home.²⁸³

The family’s journey to Jackson began in 2009 in Ft. Worth, Texas where she and 15 other families ran an art and activist center called “Roots and Culture,” affiliated with the Malcolm X Grassroots Organizing Movement²⁸⁴ and Republic of New Afrika.²⁸⁵ As activists affiliated with Black separatist movements that sought separate economic, political, and cultural development for people of African descent in America, Roots and Culture did not participate in government and municipal programs. In particular, they were not engaged in Ft. Worth’s metropolitan planning processes. However, when Ft. Worth’s municipal planners determined that a development corridor with streetscape improvements would run directly through Roots and Culture’s property, which had sat like a “pillar”²⁸⁶ in the neighborhood for 30 years, the center was threatened with imminent domain. Roots and Culture opted to sell, and Nia and her family began looking for their next cooperative effort. Drawn

²⁸² Lozada, R. J. “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 27, 2019, at Groundworker Exchange Conference, Jackson, MS. Audio. 24:30.

²⁸³ “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 27, 2019, 25:00.

²⁸⁴ Malcolm X Grassroots Movement. “Home.” MGM. <https://www.mxgm.org/>.

²⁸⁵ “Republic of New Afrika.” Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_New_Afrika.

²⁸⁶ “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 27, 2019, 16:58.

to a location with established movement work and cultural roots, they settled in Jackson and began the Cooperative Community of New West Jackson (CCNWJ).²⁸⁷

CCNWJ is a community land trust and neighborhood development initiative located in the West Jackson neighborhood of Jackson, Mississippi. CCNWJ currently holds 65 properties in a trust in an eight block area, purchased overtime for a little over \$90,000.²⁸⁸ Nia and Takuma serve as lead organizers, working alongside a host of neighborhood residents and youth, local activists, and municipal and organizational partners in Jackson and nationally. A rotating group of artists and activists from around the country are invited into the community to offer their skills.

The initial process of organizing with their neighbors was not easy. They began organizing door-to-door immediately, but their efforts were not well received. People didn't want to speak with them and were uncomfortable by their forward approach. "In our neighborhood nobody talked to each other except through the police. It was not done. You did not walk up to somebody's door and knock on it. People walked around with guns on their hips."²⁸⁹ Undeterred their work continued. Overtime they began holding community meetings, but as typical with this kind of work elaborate plans would rarely lead to organized community action. "We would have work plans, we would decide things, but then it would be me and Takuma [doing the work]. We'd have other people show up, but they'd be there with their

²⁸⁷ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 27, 2019, 16:15-18:30.

²⁸⁸ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 27, 2019, 78:10.

²⁸⁹ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 27, 2019, 26:41-18:30.

beer, with their lounge chair, watching. Laughing. Because it was laughable.”²⁹⁰

These early moments of organizing in their community shifted their expectations, forced them to slow down their process, and required them in their own terms to become humble and submit to a recognition that if it was going to be done it could only be done with the people. “They get asked, they get told, they get opportunities, and if they don’t like it, we stop!”²⁹¹ That willingness to halt efforts, immediately signalled to neighbors that they were listening, and that they were truly looking for affirmation and consent from the community. This affected how neighbors perceived Nia and Takuma’s work, and “does something to the mind.”²⁹²



Figure 7: View of CCNWJ Model Block

²⁹⁰ “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 27, 2019, 56:00.

²⁹¹ “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 27, 2019, 57:55.

²⁹² “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 27, 2019, 58:16.



Figure 8: View of Grenada St. Folk Garden

CCNWJ's practice is intentional, persistent, and exceedingly slow, devoted to a model of "community development at the speed of trust."²⁹³ This means that the Cooperative moves in accordance with the community's comfort, interest, and timing. Work is rarely contracted to people outside the community. Instead, the cooperative uses neighborhood labor with the intention of directing social and economic activity back into the neighborhood.²⁹⁴ When skills to accomplish work are not already present in the neighborhood, community members are apprenticed and trained. Gradually, the Cooperative seeks to transform the neighborhood by cleaning streets, filling potholes, cultivating land, rebuilding homes, clearing trees, harvesting food, and caring for the properties and neighbors living among them. In this way, the

²⁹³ Field note, Nia.

²⁹⁴ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 27, 2019, 6:27.

Cooperative gradually forges pathways toward community interdependence, self-reliance, and self-determination. Through an ethic of cooperation, CCNWJ seeks to transform the experience of endemic poverty into a positive interpersonal and collective experience of resourcefulness. “We’re not doing anything about blight or safety or anything else. We are creating an environment of wellness.”²⁹⁵ As one neighbor living alongside the cooperative described his experience of the neighborhood’s change, “Incredible. Anytime you change something, it’s incredible. When I was five years old I saw a worm on the ground and it changed into a butterfly. That’s incredible...This whole street was condemned...it’s incredible...it ain’t all about the houses...It’s bigger than that.”²⁹⁶

I was invited into this community through the Groundworkers Exchange, a week-long residency exploring “intersections of poverty, food, art and housing, self-determination and equitable community development.”²⁹⁷ From March 26-31, 2019, 32 artists, activists, farmers, organizational directors, and funders representing “values aligned organizations” worked to share “strategic and practical solutions in an effort to build health, wealth and power” for the Cooperative.²⁹⁸ Attendees came from across the US, including Oakland, Greensboro, Minneapolis, Boston, Chicago, Baltimore, Newark, and Atlanta, specializing in property development, cooperative

²⁹⁵ “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 27, 2019, 28:00.

²⁹⁶ Lozada, R. J. “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 29, 2019, at Groundworker Exchange Conference, Jackson, MS. Audio. 29:00.

²⁹⁷ Groundwork Exchange Invitation.

²⁹⁸ Groundwork Exchange Invitation.

structures, farming, carceral justice, food policy, legal aid, and organizational design. We were invited to ground ourselves in the community. I was invited to participate on behalf of my work at Elsewhere, a museum and artist residency in Greensboro, North Carolina, that I co-founded and directed. I have been in conversation with Nia through the ArtPlace Summit since 2015, and she was a resident artist at Elsewhere in 2016. I was invited specifically to consult on designs for future residencies. As an artist, researcher, and activist participating in the exchange, I was curious to experience and support CCNWJ in its holistic urban development practice.

In this chapter, I seek to construct a comprehensive case study of CCNWJ as a model for intentional and integrated neighborhood and community development using placemaking. I contextualize CCNWJ within the overall socio-economic condition of Jackson, Mississippi, and review existing development plans that address the critical needs facing the West Jackson neighborhood. I then look at the underlying structure and strategies of the CCNWJ model to consider how they apply tropes of activation, participation, and engagement common within placemaking and community development models. As appropriate, I introduce additional strategies developed during the Groundwork Exchange. I conclude with a look at the National Endowment for the Art's *How Art Works System Map*, a cultural policy platform for an expanding field of socially engaged artist practice. What distinguishes CCNWJ model is a theory of community change focused on trust building rather than reducing community deficits. CCNWJ's focus on the development of social bonds

and trust is a foundational component of their work, how they model cooperative practice, construct housing, determine outcomes for their work. As I unfold CCNWJ's story, I specifically look at how the totality of their work serves to shape, encourage, support, and be accountable to forms of trust within their neighborhood. With them I ask, what is the *art* of urban development, and how can an intentional practice of trust-building in creative placemaking serve as a primary building block of community empowerment, self determination and economic revitalization?

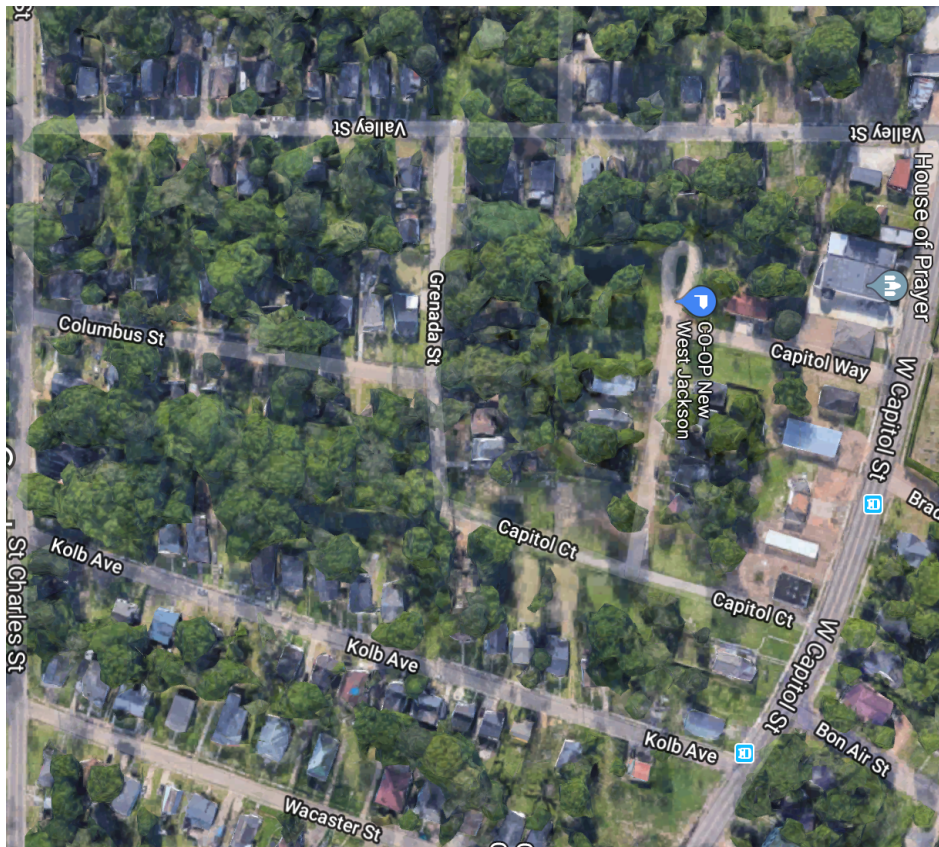


Figure 9: Satellite View of CCNWJ²⁹⁹

²⁹⁹ Google Maps. Jackson, Mississippi.
<https://www.google.com/maps/@32.3124846,-90.2145559,878m/data=!3m1!1e3>.

Five years in, the project has multiple initiatives under way, consisting of a mix of housing redevelopment, land cultivation, and community planning. The satellite image (fig. 9), circa 2014, shows the eight blocks that are part of CCNWJ. Capitol Street at the top of the map is the main thoroughfare of West Jackson. A set of still undeveloped commercial and residential buildings sit on either side of the street belonging to the Cooperative. The short street a block off Capitol St. ending in a cul-du-sac, is the *Model Block* under development as a mixed use residential and commercial district (fig. 7). The property at the corner of Grenada St and Capitol Ct is the Grenada Street Folk Garden (fig. 8). The Umoja's house (fig. 11) sits at the intersection of Columbus and Grenada Streets and the bulk of properties held in trust are interspersed across 24.5 acres between Capitol and St. Charles streets located at the bottom of the map (fig. 9).

From the ground, some aspects of the project are more visible than others. The most visible pieces are the Grenada Street Folk Garden (fig 2), a large plot where the neighborhood dumping grounds used to be, and the *Model Block* (fig 1), which serves as the more public facing frontage and Cooperative's proof of concept. Set between the main thoroughfare and the more dense residential streets, the Model Block is the most distinctively developed area, but it also helps shield the neighbors from public gaze and outside speculation created by the Cooperative. Plans and drawings exist for commercial and residential projects throughout the neighborhood, however they remain only as concepts. They include a local pie shop with a small commercial kitchen for resident use, a textile studio, a youth media

space, a salon for training young women in hair care, a playground, a tiny house village for youth apprentices, a jobs center and entrepreneurial corridor, a cafe, even a birthing center. At the moment none of these projects are in motion, intentionally so. Instead these proposals share potential paths for both the Cooperative and the residents.



Figure 10: Nia Umoja presents drawings for a tiny house village



Figure 11: Restored home of Nia and Takuma Umoja

Nia, Takuma, and their eight children live in an unassuming home, creatively refurbished using found wood as siding (fig. 11). Their modest home remains

unfinished in an intentional effort to communicate their ongoing commitment to the neighborhood. It sits alongside the Grenada Street Folk Garden, which currently grows an assortment of vegetables including okra, sweet potato, squash, carrots, collards, garlic, spring onions, strawberries, and asparagus. Work is underway to build an aquaponic system for sustainably raising water plants and fish. A recently planted fruit orchard with over 30 trees and a dozen varieties of fruit provided by Groundwork participant Planting Justice will significantly increase food yield and access in this food desert.³⁰⁰ The garden is built and maintained by paid *neighbor labor* and a *youth apprentices* supported by national grant funds.

Cultivating land is at the heart of CCNWJ model because it exemplifies the basic relationship of meaningful labor and healthy community resources—fresh food, jobs, skill training, social and economic capital—all stacked into the functions of land and property development.



Figure 12: Mural at the Grenada St. Folk Garden by artist Hotep.

³⁰⁰ Planting Justice. "Five Acre Mother Orchard." <http://plantingjustice.org/farm>.

The recently completed mural (Fig. 12) by local artist and neighborhood resident Hotep describes an integrated cycle of social and economic capital developed through land cultivation. It reads:

“Good Food: We believe that good food is fresh food that is good for the mind, body, and spirit, and that it should be planted, harvested, and prepared here, where we live.

Good Folk: We believe that good food should be grown cooperatively by our good neighbors and that those of us not farming should buy, eat, or sell what is grown by our farmers.

Good Fair: We believe that good food should be good for our health and our pockets, and that profit from produce sales should recycle back into our neighborhood to better it and ourselves.”

The proximate intersection of nourishing food resources, labor, neighborhood economics, and community wealth is captured in the cycles of land and crop cultivation. Work in the garden helps strengthen social bonds within the community, especially among neighborhood youth who are paid to farm the land. Food production helps address issues food insecurity. West Jackson, like many impoverished urban areas, contains a high number of USDA designated food deserts with low income and low access to fresh food within .5 mile.³⁰¹ Selling low cost shares of fresh vegetables back to the neighborhood through a cooperatively owned and operated farm stand increases fresh food access and models simple cooperative economies. As Takuma explains, “It is through the work that we advance values.”³⁰²

³⁰¹ Economic Research Service. “Food Access Research Atlas.” United States Department of Agriculture. Last modified May 18, 2017.
<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>.

³⁰² Field notes.

The garden operates as an anchor within the Cooperative's redevelopment plan, providing effective land use by providing labor and sellable produce while addressing immediate and endemic food access and health issues facing the community. Once a dumping ground that invited criminal activity and physically cut off access between the residential neighborhoods and Capitol Street, it is now a connective corridor through the community. As a connective corridor it provides many more functions for the community than just food and jobs. Describing the garden Nia tells the Groundworkers, "This is our art process space, this is healing space for our community, this is a wellness space, this is a hang out space, we have wifi on the farm."³⁰³

The Folk Garden also aims to disrupt historically oppressive narratives around farming. Community members expressly resisted farming row crops as it alluded to generational memories of sharecropping.³⁰⁴ The land holds trauma for the community, but by its rejection, certain skills, resources, and forms of political self determination were also lost. The garden seeks to reimagine experience-based community knowledge, highlight untapped social and economic resources, and create a visible sign of neighborhood beautification. Visually, the garden creates a powerful impression for both neighbors and visitors of the community's growing vitality and resourcefulness.

Bordering the Grenada Street Folk Garden is the Model Block. Five houses restored at a cost of approximately \$7500 each, are now brightly colored, rentable

³⁰³ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 29, 2019, 25:26.

³⁰⁴ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 27, 2019, 42:00.

residences and another is being built as a soup and sandwich shop, library, and popsicle stand called *Just Chill'n*.



Figure 13: View of the Red Banana



Figure 14: View of residences on Model Block

As a corner anchor, the Red Banana (Fig. 13) will combine a business development enterprise with community *third place*. With its prominent gazebo and wrap around porch it seeks to make social gathering a visible expression of community cohesion. *Third place* is a term originally coined by urban sociologist Ray Oldenberg for places like cafes, churches, barber shops, parks, and libraries, that serve community needs for familiar gathering spaces that are neither work or home.

³⁰⁵ Early in the process of building neighborhood relationships there emerged a need for common meeting space. Neighbors were resistant to entering each others homes, and churches were perceived by some in the community to be insular and economically detached from the neighborhoods. “Churches lack love,” is how community members describe religious spaces in the official West Jackson Planning Guidebook.³⁰⁶

The need for gathering space, business enterprises, housing, and fresh food are just a few of the threads within a much larger tapestry being sewn to redevelop a place for trust and human capacity. Noni Session is a Groundworker participant and developer with Oakland’s East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative. As a radical developer, she is pursuing multi-million dollar, Black-owned cooperative developments in Oakland aimed at enabling generational families to remain and own a home in a rapidly unaffordable market. As a developer and community organizer she sees her work as creatively connecting, integrating and layering design,

³⁰⁵“Third Place.” Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_place.

³⁰⁶ Duvall Decker Architects. *West Jackson Planning Guidebook*. Jackson, MS: October 2014.

function, finances, social practices and human needs within a property development framework. For her, development is a generative practice of arranging a vast field of potential inputs and relationships to create form, function and financing necessary to address structural needs in a community. “The truth is in the work. The truth is in creating your world. You have to prepare a space for people to realize themselves through the work. If inputs have been broken, it’s our job to line those inputs up.”³⁰⁷

What Noni is speaking to are the way various inputs—programs, resources, properties, functions, people, and finances—are braided together like a rope, integrated into the development space in a more holistic and interdependent way that serves people’s needs. “You look at all the potential inputs that landscape can hold, and knowing that you cannot possibly line up all those inputs, you start setting targets...you cultivate relationships that get you to how you want to pull [the inputs] off the shelf and put them together.”³⁰⁸ What is exciting about her framework for development is that it recognizes the inherent diversity in property’s form and function. Through an open and generative process based around relationship building she seeks to create an economic infrastructure oriented around social patterns of shared ownership, stability, engagement, and trust.

Like all projects in the Cooperative, building a sustainable business like the Red Banana will involve a comprehensive program of job training and business development for neighborhood residents to ascend to a shared managed and owned

³⁰⁷ Scheer, George “Noni.” Recorded March 29, 2019, at Groundworker Exchange Conference, Jackson, MS. Audio. 6:00.

³⁰⁸ “Noni.” Recorded March 29, 2019. 8:00.

cooperative structure. These programs will rely initially on outside funding for start up and development as well as outside leaders supporting resident skill training. A business model of this sort would still require customers and capital from outside the community to sustain. However, the concept is that once skill sets are developed and the business can be run by neighbors it will help capture resources, provide jobs, and additional business training for the community. The program does not imagine detaching from outside capital, but how that capital is captured by the community in accordance with their needs and desires, and reinvested into needs and services that they attest to and control is what shapes this model different than traditional forms of development and social service support.

He-Meyong, a filmmaker and activist from New York who regularly contributes his time to the Cooperative, insists that the neighborhood's adoption of the Red Banana must happen in advance of its becoming an economic draw. The order is to first build community trust through hands-on labor and skill development invested into a property, then seed a place's social adoption by neighborhood residents by providing necessary gathering space, and only then proceed to expand its economic viability among communities both inside and outside of West Jackson.

The first challenge to this model is encouraging a community to adopt a new social pattern, especially with something as ephemeral and non-specific as gathering space. Changing social patterns, even if there is a level of trust built, takes time and relies on informal opinion leaders within the community to help create and sustain a scene. People are much quicker to adopt a consumable commodity than a

change in their social patterns. However, in a low-income neighborhood, selling a desirable product with viable profit margin while also not attracting outside interest too quickly is difficult.

During the Groundworker Exchange, I and several other participants recommended that rather than focus on a new business development, Just Chilln' and the Red Banana could translate the existing farm stand into cooperative grocery store situated within a multi-use, home-like setting. A low cost business enterprises selling food grown on the land and presented in a unique, neighborhood context that welcomes the gathering of neighbors and promotes healthy eating has the additional benefit of modeling what a grocery store could be in West Jackson as opposed to available discount grocers. The Groundwork Exchange also suggested a business residency, not to develop a new business, but to entice a proximate West Jackson businesses with existing clientele, like a barber shop, too use a space like the Red Banana for lower rent, essentially importing an existing third place and clientele from other parts of the community by offering a competitive business advantage.³⁰⁹ Considering a variety of inputs seeks to address existing and imagined functions of a space by connecting a diversity of needs expressed by the community.³¹⁰

In addition to the Red Banana, The Mulberry Tree Guest House and the Blue Rooster Bungalow (Fig. 14) are owned, upfitted, and operated as AirBnB guest

³⁰⁹ Groundworkers Exchange Residency Proposal

³¹⁰ Groundworkers Exchange Residency Proposal

houses by CCNWJ.³¹¹ Though they were built by resident labor, these properties do stand out as being out of step with the more exemplary order of neighborhood redevelopment. CCNWJ was one of four AirBnB superhosts from over 650,000³¹² selected and featured in promotional videos by the company, receiving over 500,000 views.³¹³ AirBnB is appropriately criticized for “facilitating gentrification,” especially in markets like New York where the housing market is under pressure from real estate prospectors and affordable housing is scarce.³¹⁴ However, this is not the situation in Jackson. The AirBnB produces more than \$40,000/year, and these rentals are seen as a vital revenue source that reduces the Cooperative’s reliance on foundation funding. They also support mission-oriented gatherings, retreats and residencies with a comfortable and communal settings for large groups.

³¹¹ Nia. “Mulberry Tree Guesthouse, Cottage Near Downtown.” Airbnb, Inc. https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/17134340?location=Jackson%2C%20Mississippi%2C%20United%20States&guests=1&adults=1&s=C-Ev_IJz.

³¹² Jackson State University, Center for University-Based Development. “Co-Op of New West Jackson Recognized by Airbnb.” West Jackson, December 14, 2018. <https://westjxn.com/2018/12/14/co-op-of-new-west-jackson-recognized-by-airbnb/>.

³¹³ Airbnb. “Superhost Nia.” Facebook. Video, 1:18. <https://www.facebook.com/airbnb/videos/340007489911619/>.

³¹⁴ Wachsmuth, David, and Alexander Weisler. “Airbnb and the rent gap: Gentrification through the Sharing Economy.” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, (February 2018). DOI: 10.1177/0308518X18778038.



Figure 15: Mulberry Tree Guest House and Blue Rooster Bungalow AirBnB's

CCNWJ acknowledges that the development of AirBnB rental homes represents a test of community trust and their insular model of slow development. The AirBnB profile garnered wide attention in Jackson, and while other community land trusts in the city are trying to mimic their success other social activists have expressed concern that a high profile AirBnB will drive up property value and cause displacement. Nia herself expresses concern about the time consuming nature of running a thriving rental business and the responsibility to provide renters security and comfort while not promising a naive sense of safety or offering a voyeuristic experience of living inside a low income neighborhood.

Outsiders, especially White people, signal to the community the presence of wealth and change, and subject the Cooperative to incidents of theft and perceptions that Nia and her family are outsiders. It is for this reason that I note the importance

of the concentration of these guest houses within the Model Block separated from the more dense residential neighborhood. Like many decisions made by Nia and the cooperative, it is a calculated and intentional risk, and there is a careful screening process for guests, which has proven to be effective in attracting like-minded allies interested in experiencing and supporting CCNWJ's mission. The presence of the rentals demonstrates that CCNWJ's work is neither entirely insular or ideologically rigid, but instead seeks to balance the need for economic independence with the necessity of outside capital. As it currently stands, the management of the rentals by Nia and the way guests are oriented upon their arrival is focused on the safety and protection of the community's integrity and right to exist.

Conditions in Jackson

"We are on the frontline of genocide," Nia tells the assembled group of Groundworkers, referring to centuries of poverty, physical, political, and economic violence perpetrated on Black communities in Mississippi.³¹⁵ White Mississippians historically settled slaves in disproportionately large numbers in the western part of the state.³¹⁶ Following emancipation, White supremacist repeatedly disrupted and denied Black political self-determination and participation, and violently defended Jim Crow laws. A diversity of non-violent actions and movement tactics drew the national Civil Rights movement to Mississippi during Freedom Summer, led by Mississippians Fannie Lou Hamer and Jackson's Medgar Evers. Following the 1965

³¹⁵ Field notes.

³¹⁶ Percy Lee Rainwater, *Mississippi: storm center of succession, 1856-1861* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969, p.6.

Voting Rights Act, White gentrification of rural counties led to the evacuation of White wealthier classes from Jackson's urban neighborhoods, segregating community wealth from the city and into predominantly White counties surrounding Jackson and Hinds County. In West Jackson, this violence is still strikingly present in structural insecurities and physical deterioration visible in the landscape.

The West Jackson community members recognize the conditions of concentrated poverty, and can name them. Against these conditions many unaffiliated efforts are underway in food justice, farming, political organizing, and urban planning at a neighborhood and city level. There are many strategies being deployed across the community in light of the endemic problems of poverty. Millions in high profile creative placemaking grants have been made recently by foundations including ArtPlace, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Whole Foods' Whole Cities Foundation. It is doubtful that this funding is changing the structural conditions of West Jackson. In the following section I provide an overview of the economic and housing conditions in West Jackson. I also consider city and community planning efforts to support economic redevelopment and compare the strategies proposed in the West Jackson Plan with CCNWJ's model.

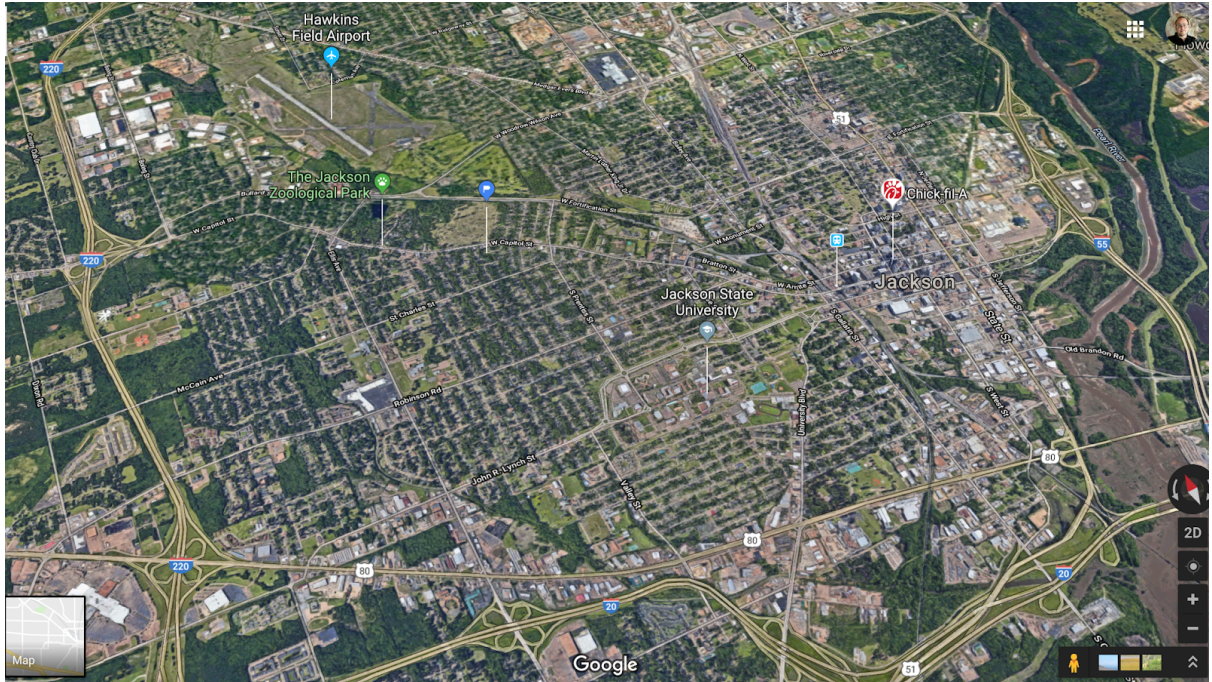


Figure 16: Map of Jackson Mississippi and the West Jackson neighborhood

The neighborhood of West Jackson is composed by the area under the curve of Capitol Street to the north and State Route 80 on the south, between downtown Jackson and Interstate 220 (fig. 9). Jackson State University, an HBCU, is the most prominent public institution in the neighborhood. West Jackson contains 13,890 residents, with 4388 total households and 2487 families.³¹⁷ The Median household income in West Jackson is \$30,536 with per capita income at just \$12,748/year.³¹⁸ Rent burden for residents is 46.27% with almost 50% of people in West Jackson living below the poverty line, 21% with incomes less than 50% below the poverty line.³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Duvall Decker Architects. *West Jackson Planning Guidebook*. Jackson, MS: October 2014.

³¹⁸ City-Data.com. "39216 Zip Code (Jackson, MS) Detailed Profile." <http://www.city-data.com/zips/39216.html>.

³¹⁹ City-Data.com. "39216 Zip Code (Jackson, MS) Detailed Profile."

To get a sense of how income and wealth disparities are geographically situated, consider that, in 2016, the estimated median household income in the city of Jackson was \$39,724 and \$41,754 in the state of Mississippi, roughly \$9,000-\$11,000 more than in West Jackson. Per capita income in Jackson was \$22,913, over \$10,000 more than West Jackson³²⁰ Compare this to Fondren, one of Jackson's most gentrified neighborhoods where median income in 2016 was \$47,784 and increased by approximately 57% since 2000.³²¹ Neighboring Madison County, which is 60% white according to the 2000 census, has a household median income comparable to Fondren of \$46,970 with the highest per capita incomes in the state at \$23,549. This also is the only county in the state with a per capita income higher than the national average.³²²

The disparities are even greater in communities immediately surrounding CCNWJ, where there are approximately 254 households, and 75.6% of residents have incomes below the area median and nearly 40% live with income 50% below the poverty line. 73% of households in this community are non-family households, meaning that the basic organization of housing is not familial units but another household arrangement. 72.8% of children in the community surrounding CCNWJ are in households living below the poverty line.³²³

³²⁰ City-Data.com. "39216 Zip Code (Jackson, MS) Detailed Profile."
<http://www.city-data.com/zips/39216.html>.

³²¹ City-Data.com. "39216 Zip Code (Jackson, MS) Detailed Profile."

³²² "Madison County, Mississippi." Wikipedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madison_County,_Mississippi#Communities.

³²³ Census Reporter. " Census Tract 413, Jackson, MS."
<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/14000US28059041300-census-tract-413-jackson-ms/>.



Figure 17: Abandoned pre-1940's house in WJ



Figure 18: Abandoned pre-1940's house in CCNW



Figure 19 - Affordable housing in West Jackson



Figure 20 - Hope VI housing (on right) infilled into West Jackson neighborhood

Economic deterioration is matched by housing deterioration. The median age of housing in West Jackson is 51 years old.³²⁴ 65.5% of housing in the area was built

³²⁴ Census Reporter. "Census Tract 413, Jackson, MS."
<https://censusreporter.org/profiles/14000US28059041300-census-tract-413-jackson-ms/>.

before 1980. Almost 40% of existing housing was built before 1960. A striking 13.67% of the housing stock was built before 1939, and many of these historic homes are gutted and abandoned (Fig. 17 & 18). Only 2% of new housing construction happened in the 1990's, demonstrating both the age of existing housing stock and the extraordinary gap in new housing construction and investment in the last 20 years.³²⁵ The majority of these more recent housing developments were either large affordable housing complexes (Fig. 19) or Hope VI, infill developments that appear awkwardly placed among existing housing (Fig. 20).

According to a survey of properties completed for the West Jackson Planning Guidebook, of 6,478 lots in West Jackson, 1,832 are vacant with no structures on them and 837 lots with abandoned structures on them. This accounts for 41% of the lots in the area. Of those lots with no structures on them, 37% are owned by the State of Mississippi, City of Jackson, or Jackson State University, meaning they produce no property taxes for the city or county, and are probably not reflected on an organized property inventory.³²⁶ Efforts to repair, build and sustain home ownership is also met with resistance. In 2018, 937 loan applications were initiated in the census area surrounding CCNWJ, 871 applicants were denied, accounting for a nearly 93% denial rate. This included FHA loans, refinancing, and home improvement loans. Only 66 loans were accepted.³²⁷

³²⁵ City-Data.com. "39216 Zip Code (Jackson, MS) Detailed Profile."

³²⁶ Duvall Decker Architects. *West Jackson Planning Guidebook*.

³²⁷ "Jackson, Hinds County, MS Pre-Foreclosures." RealtyTrac.
<https://www.realtytrac.com/mapsearch/pre-foreclosures/ms/hinds-county/jackson/>.



Figure 21 - Vacant property held in CCNWJ trust



Figure 22 - Vacant property held in CCNWJ trust

In 2013 a master planning process for West Jackson laid out the core economic and infrastructural conditions facing the neighborhood. The plan cost \$250,000, the bulk of which went into research and data collection about the neighborhood, including a survey of property and community needs assessments. CCNWJ was present and represented in this planning process. Derisively, Nia calls

the plan a “developers dream.”³²⁸ Community stakeholders identified homelessness, vacant lots, poor housing conditions, and K-12 education as the primary concerns facing the neighborhood. Stakeholder sessions also captured community sentiment and material conditions relating to neighborhood vulnerability and distress. These included municipal code violations and dilapidated streetscapes, poor housing, lack of safety, inaccessibility of fresh food, homelessness and poverty, poorly performing schools, and disinvested community institutions.

The litany of complaints are worth repeating because they capture an image of the daily, visible conditions of poverty within the community. Those complaints include poor public infrastructure, ineffective public transportation, bad street lighting, broken sidewalks, infrequent trash collection, dangerous potholes, and problems with sewer drainage. Additionally, there are problems of dilapidated housing, abandoned lots, absentee landlords, and unconcerned property owners. People worry about the prevalence of crime, violence and drugs, over-policing, limited access to fresh food, lack of jobs, and the abundance of predatory businesses like liquor stores, check cashing agencies, and pawn shops. People experience the pressures of mental illness, substance abuse, and homelessness in their community, not as an abstract concern but by the regular presence of vulnerable populations passing through their neighborhood. People lament that resources and institutions, like churches, neighborhood associations, and universities that should be capable and willing to improve community conditions do

³²⁸ “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 29, 2019, 36:30.

not. “Some churches and ministries with very good intentions, often fail to offer real, life-changing help.”³²⁹ Community stakeholders fear that these problems are being passed on to the next generation by failing schools.³³⁰ In the planning report these living conditions are described as “liabilities” that affect the community.³³¹

From its inventory of liabilities, the West Jackson Plan identifies five community needs: “Good quality housing and home improvement; jobs, work, and industry in the community; keeping wealth in the community; resources and services that really help homeless people; clean and beautify community.”³³² The plan identifies Capitol Street as the primary development corridor for investments made to address community liabilities. To address the economy, the plan suggests promoting employment and entrepreneurship, mixed-use development, and better lending practices to enhance economic opportunity and job growth in the community. In particular, non-profit credit lenders, road repair for bikes and multi-modal transit, and streetscaping for mixed-use commercial and residential development are the suggested financial and infrastructure investments. The plan suggests that these strategies would be enhanced by incentives for community hiring and entrepreneurial training at Jackson State. To address neighborhood improvement, the plan suggests neighborhood watch groups to promote safety, increased

³²⁹ Duvall Decker Architects. *West Jackson Planning Guidebook*. 36.

³³⁰ Duvall Decker Architects. *West Jackson Planning Guidebook*. 37.

³³¹ Duvall Decker Architects. *West Jackson Planning Guidebook*. 38.

³³² Duvall Decker Architects. *West Jackson Planning Guidebook*. 55.

coordination with police, and cleanup of allies and neighborhood dumping grounds. The plan calls on neighborhood associations to lead home redevelopment in their areas, hold landlords accountable, and work with code enforcement officials at the city. Vacant and abandoned lots are to be addressed by developing a city land bank that contains the inventory of government held properties and strategically turn them into affordable housing.³³³ The plan also encourages the development of neighborhood and community land trusts to develop properties in line with resident needs. Finally, the plan aims to activate the community through youth programming, parks, fresh food, and green space.

Overall, the proposals set forth by the plan mimics the solutions applied in many communities, with the exception, perhaps, of land banking and community-held land trusts. The more of a planning framework than an implementable roadmap, it contains no budget, feasibility, or implementation strategy. It calls for increased code enforcement and policing, which intends to create an environment shaped by government penalty, increased risk for residents, and greater comfort for organized capital (i.e. foundations, banks, and developers). By identifying a development corridor, the plan directs capital to cut through the community with mixed-use residential and commercial development, setting into motion a process for outside investment and gentrification. Ultimately the plan can't accomplish anything because it puts all the onus on community associations,

³³³ Vicory, Justin. "#MSLeg: This Bill Targeted Eyesores across Mississippi, had Bipartisan Support. It Still Died." *Mississippi Clarion Ledger*, February 7, 2019. <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/politics/2019/02/07/msleg-bill-bi-partisan-support-tackle-blighted-properties-dead-mississippi-legislature/2776949002/>.

property owners, government officials, churches, and institutions that the community has already expressed aren't properly invested in their concerns.

All that said, CCNWJ identifies analogous needs and solutions as the West Jackson plan. CCNWJ focuses on three primary needs expressed by residents: the need to make money, for youth activity, and to clean up the neighborhood.³³⁴

CCNWJ's solutions aren't dissimilar either. They include a principled neighborhood, residential and business mixed-use development effort lead by a cooperative neighborhood association working to decrease vacancy, increase affordable housing, clean up the streets and yards, foster workforce training and business services, and even cultivate outside investment into the neighborhood. The identified needs and strategies to address them are essentially the same between the Jackson Plan and CCNWJ, but the difference is how they determine a pathway to community change.

The fundamental difference between CCNWJ's model as opposed to the Jackson Plan is that underlying theory of community change is about strengthening community trust rather than reducing liability. Kenneth Bailey at the Design Studio for Social Intervention in Boston asked Nia a pointed question about the structure of community trust, "What has happened between people in terms of horizontal trust?" He went on to describe horizontal trust as those relationship bonds between neighbors as opposed to trust developed between residents and the Cooperative or residents and Nia. "If that trust has been built," Kenneth followed, "is there a

³³⁴ Field notes.

common space where people get to come and practice this new trust with each other?" This resulted in a dynamic call and response between Kenneth and Nia:

Nia: Brother Derrick saw Ms. Mary who just had surgery on her knee, and they don't speak. She was out there raking her leaves he stops in the middle of the street and gets out of the car with his blower, and blows the leaves into a pile.

Kenneth: That's a huge win

Nia: That's a huge win. When he stops there on the corner to talk to Big Boy, and gives him a dap...

Kenneth: That's a huge win

Nia: That's a huge win. When Vanessa gets rid of her 15 dogs all on her own when she's been so hostile about it.

Kenneth: We'll take that.

Nia: That's a huge win. When she goes and buys new windows to put in her house, that's a huge win. When folks start inviting their family over to their house, when folks start letting their children play in the streets, which is happening, that's a huge win.

Kenneth: Enormous win.

Nia: When Mr. McCoy is not walking around with his pistol strapped to his hip. That's a huge win. When he feels comfortable to bring his shiny new Mercedes out of the driveway and park it on the street, that's a huge win. These are the things. When Ms. Jean is not trying to sell her house anymore, that's a huge win. This is all from the work we've curated in the space.³³⁵

Their dialogue offers a litany of community assets based on a belief in the fundamental resourcefulness of the community and its willingness to create change for itself. These horizontal bonds, as small and proximate as they are, speak to a kind of receptivity to the values communicated through environmental change. By

³³⁵ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 28, 2019, 14:30-16:00.

creating a diversity of inputs within the environment it allows people to discover relationships with each other, form a basis for resilience, develop higher orders of community organization, and ultimately control the flow of capital and other resources that move through neighborhood as it grows from surviving to sustaining. As Noni points out, “As Americans, and particularly as Black Americans, our trust structures are fractured as fuck.” Each asset distinguished in the above litany speaks to the emotional and intellectual complexity of trust. It is never something expressed but instead, enacted through small gestures, actions, personal investments and interpersonal exchanges. It begins with blowing leaves, stopping to talk, fixing windows, touching hands, and evolves into larger and more important things like showing pride in possessions, letting children play with less supervision, and recommitting to being a part of the neighborhood. Trust is not transactional in the sense that it requires or expects reciprocation. Trust builds over time an empathetic relation between individuals that comes to clarify what can be expected and desired from others.

When Nia speaks about the conditions facing her community, the sadness she expresses is a mix of frustration and anger. However, her emotions are not about the lack of assets, resources, or support. Her sadness stems from the way generations of poverty have patterned an individualist instinct for survival and fundamentally incapacitated the collective will to grow community value. This distinction between addressing inventoried liabilities (e.g., the city’s planning report) versus remedying collective deficiency (e.g., CCNWJ’s model) grounds CCNWJ’s

theory of change. For CCNWJ it is not about bringing resources to a community, but rather, by positively strengthening horizontal bonds of trust a community can access its own resourcefulness, resilience, and power. Potential is always present in the neighborhood's people. The challenge is how to access those qualities of social engagement social qualities and bring them into service to the community. Trust serves as the outward mode of interaction, a kind of public communicative practice, that demonstrates and enacts the potential of a cooperative relationship.

The Cooperative Community Model

CCNWJ's model for cooperative growth asks how to move people from a mode of survival to sustaining. They offer four stages of resident investment: *Activate, Participate, Engage and Educate*.³³⁶ At the *active* phase, people move from complacency to action, still very individualistic, but making some effort to care for their properties and the neighborhood based on the work they see happening within the cooperative. The *participate* phase features CCNWJ organized projects that direct developing actions like working or redeveloping houses. Here, direction and accountability remains structured by Cooperative leadership and features payment and modeling practices. In the *engage* phase residents show up with questions and personal interests in the process of cooperative development. From the engage phase, an *education* process may begin, getting residents involved in the cooperative community structures and providing resources for them to also become leaders and modelers in the community.³³⁷

³³⁶ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 27, 2019, 49:30.

³³⁷ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 27, 2019, 64:00.

CCNWJ's process for neighborhood development is heavily oriented by a practice they call modeling. Modeling is a demonstration of values. Modeling is not a model. A model is like 'mixed-use development,' an abstract and replicable form imposed upon, adapted, or adopted by people in place. Modeling is a practice featured in every aspect of the work, by which the intention of each action is expressive of interpersonal and communal values that demonstrate the way leadership and accountability exist as assets in the community. For example, a volunteer builder working alongside Takuma led the construction of the Red Bananas' gazebo with paid neighbor labor and youth apprentices who show up for work and are treated as mentees and community collaborators rather than laborers. The modeling framework does not negate the intention of using farming and housing labor to create jobs. Instead the practice of labor, distinct from the transaction of payment, is intended to communicate skill sets, cooperative accountability, and collective ownership of properties, and ideally inspiring do-it-yourself restorations within the neighborhood. Modeling seeks to provoke the adoption of habits, skills, social bonds, and do-it-yourself approaches within all facets of the community, rather than the adoption of imported forms.

After five years of work, residents are only just becoming active, and certain expressions of *participation* that mimic the CCNWJ's work, such as residents' repairing houses for rent, replacing windows, and repainting facades bright colors, are only just beginning to emerge. These acts of *participation* happen outside any formal planning or cooperative residential structure, but they do represent a new

sense of agency that the Cooperative points to as evidence of impact. Nia makes it clear, however, that cooperative bonds within the community are still very tenuous and informal. Formal neighborhood meetings co-exist with informal door-to-door conversations. Work is done gradually with basic tools and equipment so that every step feels accessible. Labor used to restore houses and build the garden remains relatively unscheduled, allowing neighborhood youth who wish to participate to simply come and go on their own accord.

Flexibility resists the perception that the cooperative is either an employer or service provider in the traditional sense. In fact, there are no formal cooperative governing board or operating bylaws, no membership dues, or association protocols. There isn't even a non-profit designation for CCNWJ, only a fiscal sponsor that holds properties and manages disbursement of large foundation funding. Concepts and drawings for the larger property holdings have been drafted by CCNWJ, however, these plans remain shelved. Like the land trust itself, they hold a place for future development. They are neither introduced nor implemented without the aforementioned *participation* by residents. Like the creative placemaking practices utilized in the Villages of Arts and Humanities discussed previously, pace and order is essential. All projects must emerge directly from what residents state as their needs. Until neighbors want a cooperative framework and are willing to engage as owners then the formal structures are seen as inappropriate. "When people are ready, they will make demands," Nia contends.³³⁸

³³⁸ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 27, 2019, 33:35.

CCNWJ's 10 year vision is simple, accessible, and honest: "to create an environment that has opportunities for people to do something different if they want to."³³⁹ The more complex cooperative imagination conceives of a neighborhood *engaged* and *educated* developing and directing residential, food, and commercial opportunities, capitalizing on the dearth of properties held in trust and managed by neighborhood residents. This cooperative community would employ and service its residents, while capturing outside capital to further develop skills, relationships, and health for people in the neighborhood. However, neighborhood residents must first move from modes of survival to sustaining through a gradual process that encourages self-initiated and directed patterns of cultural self-determination to take root.

The project is not without its barriers and threats emerging from both inside and outside the neighborhood. Common challenges facing impoverished communities include illiteracy, normalization of drugs, addiction, crime, and cycles of incarceration. These common conditions create challenges for community stability. Theft and vandalism particularly, are present and enduring problems that regularly test the effectiveness of CCNWJ's modeling approach. A recent incident following the Groundworker Exchange reportedly involved one of the youths participating in a minor breaking and entering into one of the residencies. As had been expressly feared, the presence of so many outsiders left the community vulnerable and a target. However according to He-Meyong, the issue was handled organically by a

³³⁹ "Nia Umoja." Recorded March 27, 2019, 52:54.

group of youth apprentices who confronted the perpetrator. This was viewed as evidence of horizontal trust building and engagement where accountability was expressed and modeled from within the community. Other structural challenges concern these youth apprentices who no longer are covered by government assistance when they turn 18 and are often force to leave their homes. It is for this reason specifically that CCNWJ has considered plans for developing a tiny house village providing transitional single occupancy houses for neighborhood youth.

Outside the Cooperative, barriers and threats include the West Jackson Master Plan, which places significant investment pressures on the organic shape of the neighborhood's development. This pressure is heightened by the overlay of an Economic Opportunity Zone on West Jackson, which can serve as a powerful incentive and tool for development efforts but also has led to code enforcement and increased policing within the neighborhood.

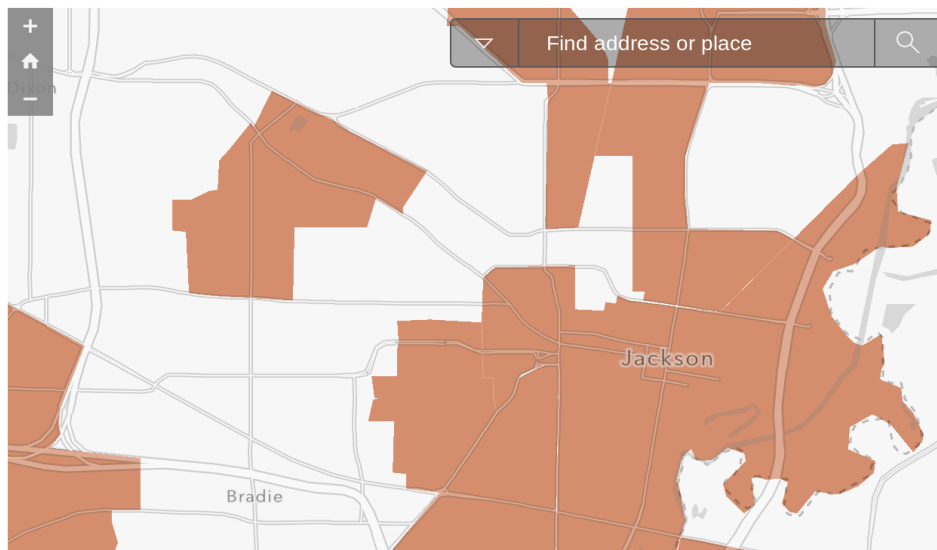


Figure 23: Opportunity Zones in Jackson, MS³⁴⁰

³⁴⁰"Opportunity Zones in Hinds County, Mississippi." Tableau Public. Map. https://public.tableau.com/profile/cityofjackson#!/vizhome/OpportunityZones_15542333765060/OpportunityZones.

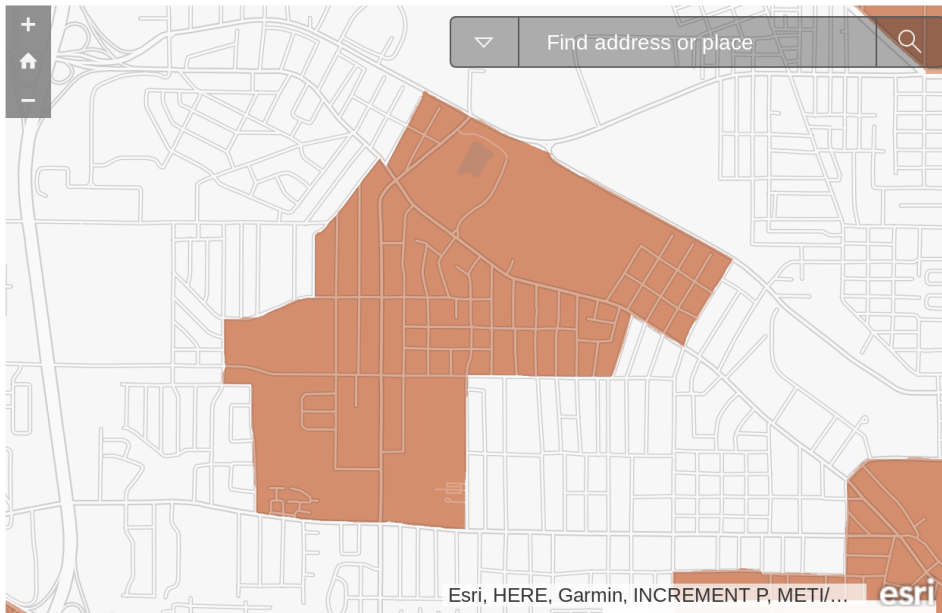


Figure 24: Opportunity Zones overlay on CCNWJ ³⁴¹

CCNWJ's slow modelling practices also do not fit the expectations of many outside funders who traditionally look to scalable economic development figures to measure impact. Even those foundations who recognize the value of incremental community development have inflexible funding models that require grants be spent in short, one to two year funding cycles. CCNWJs has reportedly refused a million dollar grant from a national foundation because the money had to be expended over an 18 month period and CCNWJ feared that such an infusion of cash would alter neighbors' perceptions and connectivity with the cooperative, advance outside pressure for further development and gentrification, and ultimately would require traditional economic metrics to prove impact.

³⁴¹ Section of Hinds County Opportunity Zone overlay specifically on CCNWJ, from Tableau Public.

	Civic, Social & Faith	Commercial	Government	Nonprofit	Philanthropy
Agriculture & Food					
Economic Development					
Education & Youth					
Environment & Energy					
Health					
Housing					
Immigration					
Public Safety					
Transportation					
Workforce Development					

Figure 25: ArtPlace America's Community Matrix

Placemaking funding for projects like CCNWJ has become increasingly available in recent years as the field has recognized its problematic role in supporting gentrifying ventures and has shifted toward more equity minded models. In 2014, ArtPlace abandoned its Vitality Index for a new Community Matrix to orient their grant making portfolio. Focused on the intersection of urban networks and sectors, Artplace uses the matrix to review its grantee proposals. This critical redesign of ArtPlace's grant making platform demonstrates a changing perspective on how art and cultural practices can be situated among social sectors and policy concerns. In the case of CCNWJ, their attention to agriculture and food, economic development, housing and youth education in concert with government, non-profit

planning efforts makes them a well situated for funding. More important, their attention to their community's cultural roots, invitation to artists to beautify the neighborhood, and the use of artistic programs as a key community development tool sets them apart from other social service initiatives.

An example of how art is used to bridge communities and communicate shared values was demonstrated during a public community dinner held during the Groundwork Exchange. Oakland based People's Kitchen Collective (PKC) curated and prepared an artistically designed dinner for over 60 local organizers of food justice, cooperative land trusts, and housing initiatives. PKC describes their work as "political education through art, activism and food," and focuses on creating large public dinners tied to place.³⁴² For example, their free meal for 500 people in the streets of Oakland created a performative homage to the Black Panther Party's Free Breakfast Program, and built dialogue about community power, self reliance, and the heritage of place.³⁴³ In Jackson, PKC drew on local civil rights narratives and ingredient histories to create a menu specific to the gathering. Through pointed questions and organic food tastings, they prodded attendees to identify shared and divergent political values.

During the meal, I sat with Cindy Ayers Elliot, the CEO of Foot Print Farms, a 68 acre crop and livestock farm supporting "agri-tourism" and community

³⁴² People's Kitchen Collective. "Home." <http://peopleskitchencollective.com/>.

³⁴³ People's Kitchen Collective. "To the Streets!" Events. <http://peopleskitchencollective.com/events/streets>.

development in Jackson.³⁴⁴ Black owned and operated, Foot Print Farms is certified by USDA and claims to be the largest urban farm in Mississippi. It is located just outside West Jackson a mile past Highway 220. Born and raised in Jackson, Cindy is a proud farmer who is excited to be an innovator in the industry. She believes farming at a large scale is a pathway for Mississippi's Black communities to build economic self-determination and a necessary and growing skill. She also argued that Jackson needs to bring in outside talent and dollars, and that local communities can't do alone. She described Foot Print's work with local schools to reshape the city's development patterns by turning vacant properties into community gardens, and spoke of her involvement with *Fertile Ground*³⁴⁵ a citywide program connecting art to issues of food access that was recently awarded a \$1 million Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge Grant.³⁴⁶ In talking with Cindy, it became clear that not only was she just beginning to participate with CCNWJ, but that the gathering itself was a first among local food, farming, art, and justice organizers.

³⁴⁴ Footprint Farms. "History." <https://footprintfarmsms.com/history/>.

³⁴⁵ Jackson Department of Planning and Development. "Fertile Ground: Inspiring Dialogue about Food Access." <https://www.jxnplanning.com/fertile-ground/>.

³⁴⁶ Bloomberg Philanthropies. "City of Jackson Will Receive \$1 Million for Public Art Project Addressing Nutrition and Food Equity in Mississippi." Updates. <https://publicartchallenge.bloomberg.org/updates/mike-bloomberg-announces-city-jackson-will-receive-1-million-public-art-project-addressing-nutrition-food-equity-mississippi/>.

Conclusions: How Art Works

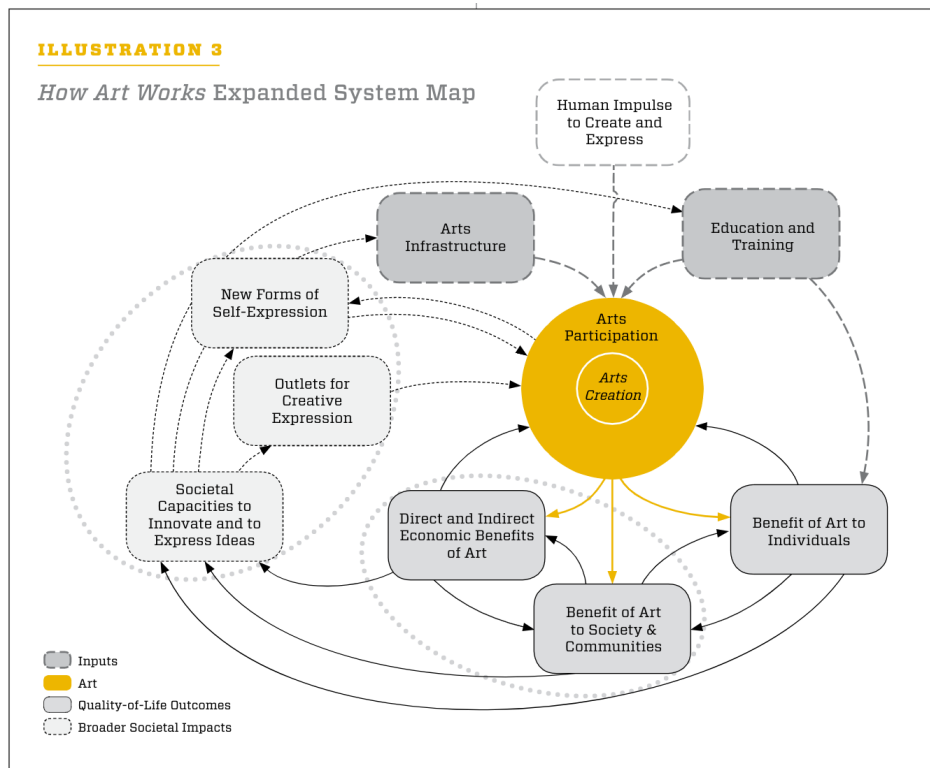


Figure 26: NEA How Art Works System Map

What is the art of community development? In chapter one and two I discussed how unified federal strategies for urban development sought to construct more interconnected and multifaceted solutions to urban socio-economic challenges. Policy makers focused specifically on metropolitan networks, cross-sector approaches, and public private partnerships. At this same moment, cultural agencies began reimagining their policy agendas to better position themselves as placemaking agents, capable of transforming American cities. Large scale cultural partnerships and new grant programs emerged to put artists at the table with community and business sectors leaders to create cultural and economic value. However, as these enterprises and new place-based cultural policies took shape, it

was concerning to see that what was envisioned as a more holistic and equitable community investment strategy often led to greater privatization and attention to economic measures rather than impactful community strategies.

Chapter three looked at how the concentration of wealth and deconcentration of poor populations featured heavily in a shifting urban landscape suffering a foreclosure crisis. I compared the rise of innovation districts, capturing tech and talent, in relation to a continued concentrations of poverty, and how the ideas surrounding the revitalization of cities and the value of mixed income communities is built upon a quieter displacement of poor people from their communities and the increasing suburbanization of poverty. I looked specifically at the way affordable housing in New Orleans applied a unified strategy to address community needs providing social services in conjunction with housing, community development and engagement. Despite rhetoric and best efforts, the ultimate outcomes only provided security for those most stable in the socio-economic spectrum, further displacing those at risk and using government and charitable funding to pay for privatization of affordable and market rate housing.

Chapter four considered how perceptions of liveability and other quality of life indicators are shaping the distribution of social and economic resources in cities. In this chapter I looked at how a major transportation development in Minneapolis utilized private cultural resources and artists to foster resiliency for communities disrupted by construction. While portions of the population appear to have emerged

stronger and better equipped to address change, larger issues of affordability and gentrification continues to threaten existing communities to remain in their place.

Finally, chapter five addressed how a grassroot cooperative community working in very disparate conditions is trying to slowly harnessing a community's inherent ability to create and participate in its own community growth through a mix of housing redevelopment, farming, and cultural planning. Through their practice of modelling, community members are becoming active, engendering trust, and beginning to participate in remaking their place through collective labor demonstrations social and economic resourcefulness. Even still, the work is slow, the need is great, and the community remains fragile and vulnerable.

In every chapter and in each case there is a moment where strategies, sectors, and resources are being integrated in seemingly new ways to develop cities and strengthen communities. The strategy of focusing resources on metropolitan regions and bringing together federal departments to address the issues of urban development was a simple and obvious step for breaking down silos, streamlining processes and resources, identifying interdependence in culture and economy, and engendering better solutions for communities by applying best practices around shared goals. The notion of creating public private partnerships is another unified approach to managing processes and leveraging available and flexible resources. The idea of livability and quality of life in an urban environment is one where the social, economic, and environmental health of a community fits together in a meaningful way to make people's lives more enjoyable, increase access, and

affordability. In an American urban and cultural geography that has been so extremely organized and segregated by functions and forms in our society (i.e. race, income, housing, commercial development and industry) the drive to reintegrate socio-economic forms requires an urbanism that supports greater diversity, meaningful measurement and a more intersectional approach applied to both economic and community development strategies.

Artists, cultural organizations, and placemaking agencies claim to make a difference toward a greater integration of people and place. Arts and cultural actors, despite best intentions, can catalyze further concentrates wealth and resources in inequitable ways. However, when we stop falling back upon desires to show arts and culture as having direct economic impact it is possible to design a much broader and more important framework for arts impact.

In 2016, ArtPlace commissioned a field level review of funded arts and cultural projects engaging directly with housing sector concerns. The report considered art projects addressing various portions of the housing sector, including mixed income developments in urban and rural markets, communities with extensive foreclosed, vacant and abandoned housing stock, neighborhoods fighting gentrification, and development on native reservations. The report grounds itself in recognition of the structural and systemic problems facing housing access and affordability in communities, disparate outcomes for communities of color, and how changing geographies and demographics are affecting the sector. While cautioning that arts programming is not a replacement for essential housing programs, it did

suggest that cultural programming serves a unique and important function.³⁴⁷

According to the report, arts and cultural programs impact “key structural and systematic barriers that prevent [developers] from building healthy, integrated, and self-sufficient living situations.”³⁴⁸

Researchers identified six important roles that art and artists play within the housing sector—to articulate, nourish, organize, bridge, stabilize, and generate. Researchers encapsulate their findings and the values of art and placemaking as its ability to “*articulate* often invisible housing challenges, to *nourish* individuals and communities who have experienced trauma through housing, to help *organize* housing campaigns, to *bridge* disparate neighborhood residents, to *stabilize* vulnerable communities, and to *generate* economic development for communities who are structurally barred from access to capital.”³⁴⁹ Together, art and cultural initiatives add value to those most integral and internal strengths that bind communities. Arts and culture address the experience of people living in place through narrative and critique, expressions of care and attention, relationship building, design, and organizational practices. While good art and placemaking orients its strategies and desired impacts around the issues defined by any given sector, the artist brings to light those more common and affective experiences that go beyond issues of any one sector. Arts and cultural practices communicate a

³⁴⁷ Sherman, Danya. *Exploring the Ways Arts and Culture Intersects with Housing*. Washington, DC: ArtPlace, April 2016.

³⁴⁸ Sherman, Danya. 6.

³⁴⁹ Sherman, Danya. 6.

particular kind of intentionality into a complex community building process that exceeds models and strategies. Creative placemaking, if done right, is a practice engaged by communities to transform their own environment, social, and economic systems in a way that serves their creative and material needs in their own terms. As simple as it is, I am advocating for a level of intentionality in all placemaking processes that necessarily begins where a community already is in order to understand, without biases, barriers, abstractions, and projections, where that community places its most essential needs. And so, I find myself asking, how does art work to increase the capacity of communities to transform themselves by expressing and making visible their own needs?

The NEA's How Art Works System Map (fig. 26), introduced in 2012, is an agency effort to organize a more expansive cultural policy and research agenda. Its primary concern is mapping the individual and societal benefits of art and culture. According to the map, a human impulse to create feeds a core of arts creation and participation that in turn generates a host of individual, social, economic benefits. Higher order societal capacities are further developed as new forms and outlets for innovation and expression take shape and continue to feed this creative core.

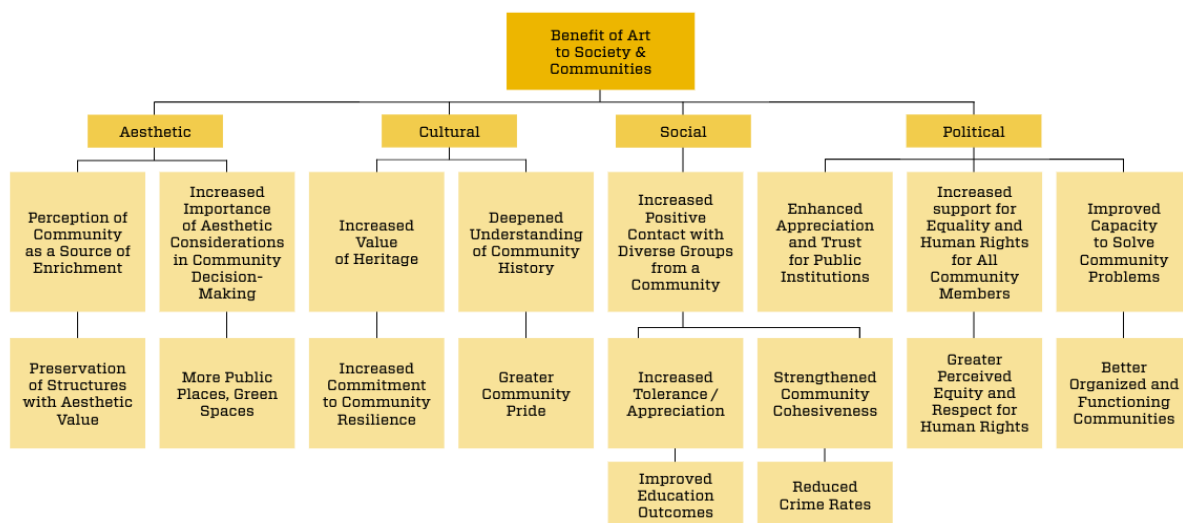


Figure 27: NEA How Art Works, Arts Creation Diagram

From decades of funding experience the Endowment outlines arts' impact on the aesthetic, cultural, social, and political dimensions of society (fig. 27). They describe arts critical role in shaping community perceptions, fostering public engagement, increasing community organization, resilience, cohesiveness, and pride. They detail how art creates greater equity, "respect for human rights," and people's capacity to self organize and solve community problems.³⁵⁰ Those involved in socially engaged arts programming recognize these and many other outcomes of artists' work in society, but how art actually works upon the social order often remains a mystery.

Arts' creation (fig. 26) is situated at the center of the map. At this innermost core of creation all of arts benefits emerge and return. Arts creation in this sense is a generative and resourceful practice that produces value in society and draws from

³⁵⁰ National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). *How Art Works: The National Endowment for the Art's Five-Year Research Agenda, with a System Map Measurement Model*. Washington, DC: NEA, September 2012. 28.

society the forms and infrastructures necessary to create. This essential core is oriented around artist, “those essential agents,” broadly and inclusively defined as “humans that express themselves...with the intention of communicating richly to others.”³⁵¹ This humanist and democratizing context is fitting for a public agency needing to justify its allocations among a hierarchy of other needs. However, the framing of art creation as an *intentional communication practice* is what interests me.

Much has been written since Duchamp about the role of artistic intention in determining what is art. However, building a cultural policy platform that sees art as an intentional communicative act instantiates something more fundamental than an artists' intention toward an object or the media they use. Rather, as a communication practice deployed in community development, art becomes an instrument for meaning-making and place-making that is connected through a kind of performative “enactment,” to use a term from Communication scholar and social art critic Shannon Jackson. Jackson uses the term to describe the way women residing at the Hull House settlement in Chicago worked on crafts as paid labor, but also to fortify communal bonds, sustain tradition, and pass on immigrant stories to children. At CCNWJ, the labor is similarly enactment performed for the benefit of fostering the community’s own sociality. “We are trying to change that mindset,” Nia explains to the Groundworker Exchange, “we are trying to get people to have an interest, because until they have that interests they can’t be educated. They can’t get this new value we are trying to bring as a cooperative community.”³⁵² Every process from

³⁵¹ National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). *How Art Works*. 21.

³⁵² “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 27, 2019. 12:44-13:25.

farming to building houses involves a rigorous process of modelling that helps communicate meaning and value beyond the work. Through modeling, basic material practices communicate values and instantiate horizontal trust between residents. “It’s in name only until people understand what it means to cooperate. Right now we are very hyper individual...we use this term community so loosely, but really what we have is a bunch of individuals that live in close proximity to each other. Community is a doing word...and in environments like this it is do or die.”³⁵³

Intentional acts of *creation and participation* communicate, build value and make places that feed the community with “new forms of self-expression” (fig. 19). The medium is redevelopment, the form is community, and the artwork is living as form, a cooperative community writ large.³⁵⁴ Systems for food, housing, and commerce can be always be engineered, implemented, and managed. However, shaping the interdependence of social, physical, and economic resources through infrastructure investment should be done with the intention and rigor of an artist. What redevelopment efforts can learn from CCNWJ’s is that intention and trust are the foundation for sustainable infrastructure and can help foster greater interdependence among resource investments. Moreover, redevelopment models would benefit by considering not simply how to support people living in a place (i.e. access, affordability), but how to center people’s underlying sociality as a primary

³⁵³ “Nia Umoja.” Recorded March 27, 2019. 12:44-13:25.

³⁵⁴ Creative Time. “About.” Living as Form.
<http://creativetime.org/programs/archive/2011/livingasform/about.htm>.

building block for making more creative and equitable communities. As cities invest and places transform, and what we need from artists is to educate us on how to see communities, and enact for us ways of being in relation to a place's underlying sociality. Only then, will we have the vision to make place according to its assets and not its liabilities.

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